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EXCURSIONS AND  
SOME ADVENTURES



*By the same Author*

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A WOMAN ALONE IN  
KENYA, UGANDA, AND  
THE BELGIAN CONGO

"Hardly anything is rarer than a good travel book and Miss Close has written one. She has the first requisite, the gift of experiencing; and the second, which is that of communicating experience."—*Spectator*.

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*Nation & Athenaeum.*





OUR USUAL CONVIYANCE.

EXCURSIONS  
AND SOME ADVENTURES

BY

ETTA CLOSE

O.B.E. F.R.G.S.

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DEDICATED TO  
ONE WHO UNDERSTANDS



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# EXCURSIONS AND SOME ADVENTURES

## NORWAY

“Oh! there is a sweetness in the mountain air,  
And life, that bloated ease can never hope to share.”

LORD BYRON.

ONCE upon a time there was a horrid little boy. The fact that he has since grown up into a particularly nice young man has got nothing to do with it. When a small boy he was horrid, for he had an annoying way of alluding to his Mother and her friends as “you who belong to the last century.”

As one of his Mother’s friends, of course I pretended not to care, and assisted in the snubbing of the horrid little boy, but all the same the words rankled—we *were* nineteenth century, there was no getting away from it. We did belong to that period when parents could do no wrong and most children could do no right, when our elders were perfectly satisfied with themselves, their country, their houses, their men-servants and their maid-servants, even with their wives; and they flattered themselves that they had a wide outlook and showed unprejudiced minds by abusing the Government, the climate, and—solely for their own good—their children.

In those days our youthful heads were never turned

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by flattery, nor even praise. How well I remember being lost with my Mother in Norway when quite a child! It was I who found the way back and, feeling rather proud of myself, ventured to say to my Mother that it was fortunate I had been with her at the time. Her reply was quick and to the point: "All the lower animals have the homing instinct," she said.

As the nineteenth century was nearing its end, Mr. Albert Pell, for many years a distinguished Member of Parliament, said to me, "Now, my dear, you are a young woman, and I am an old man. Mark my words! This coming century will be conspicuous for much cleverness and great lack of wisdom."

Of the truth of that who can say? As yet we cannot see the wood for the trees, but I do think, on looking back, that the occupants of the comfortable country houses in England when I was young were remarkably stupid. Most of them did not know, and, what is more, did not want to know, about anything further away from their own front doors than their plump horses could take them. They were not bothered with telephones and wireless. Some of them worried a bit about their own insides, but they never spent anxious days over the insides of their motors.

All was peace in the outside world. Our great Dominions were there, handy for boarding out younger sons, with advantage to all concerned; but unless they were directly interested, the mothers of the said sons had only the vaguest ideas of what the countries were like. What a shock it was when as a girl it dawned upon me that a well-known lady, wife of a Member of Parliament, believed Nova Zembla and Nova Scotia to be neighbouring islands and both within the Arctic Circle! Sometimes certain countries, such as Bulgaria, would suddenly loom large in the public eye because

of atrocities committed there, but the neighbouring countries of Bosnia, Herzegovina and Montenegro were but little known, and to the majority were only names that might be on the map of Europe, but might equally well be in the shadowland where Europe merges into Asia.

In those days few people knew, and still fewer cared—why should they? It was not as now, when people go to Central Africa with hardly more thought than would be given to a trip to Paris, and far Japan and the South Sea Islands are happy hunting-grounds for tourists.

The unknown parts of the world are daily getting smaller and visibly less; soon the whole will be mapped and wired and occupied, and finally be as well known as Bond Street, and we who belonged to the last century may congratulate ourselves that we lived in a time when so much of it was still unspoilt, full of interest and spiced with a certain amount of adventure.

It was owing to my Mother that as a child I was taken so much abroad, though why she should have had such a passion for seeing strange lands is difficult to understand, for she had never set foot outside the British Isles until she married, and had lived all her life with her Father, Sir Harry Mainwaring, in Cheshire. My Father loathed going abroad; he liked his shooting in England, and a plentiful supply of good food sent up by an excellent French chef at regular intervals. I think he had had too much of foreign parts as a boy, for he was born in Naples and lived, until he married, almost entirely on his Father's yacht in the Mediterranean. The sailors were all Italians, from Naples, and my Father talked Neapolitan as few Englishmen can. I remember years ago my Mother and I were shopping in Naples, and we induced my Father, for

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fun, to pretend to be an hotel tout taking round English tourists. Not one of the shopkeepers found him out, and all gave him the recognised tip for bringing new customers, but I nearly gave him away once by laughing when one of the shopmen condoled with him. "So sad," he said, "to find a Neapolitan with red hair." "What would you?" replied my father quite gravely; "the curse of the Madonna!" And the shopkeeper agreed, for in all the sacred pictures Judas is painted with red hair, as every good Christian knows.

Another time we were in one of the little open Neapolitan carriages, and our driver began flogging his horses unmercifully. Father told him not to do it, upon which the man took no notice and whipped his horses harder than ever. Then Father showed what he was made of: in the choicest Neapolitan he poured down curses, not only on the driver's head, but also on those of his relations, past, present and future. It was a fine performance, lasting for quite five minutes, and without repeating himself, so far as I could judge.

When it was over, the driver pulled up his horses, got down off the box seat and, standing in the road, took off his hat most politely. "Forgive me, Signor," he said humbly. "I did not know you were a Neapolitan. I mistook you for a foreigner."

My Father remembered well being chased by Barbary pirates. In those days a steam yacht was unknown; and the wind dropping, the pirates got dangerously near. There was consternation on the yacht, for they had no guns on board, only a few muzzle-loading muskets. However, somebody had an inspiration. The legs of the dining-saloon table were of mahogany, large and solid and bound with brass. These were taken off and pushed through the port-

holes, and the pirates, taking them for guns, sheered off and disappeared.

My Father served for a short time in the Swiss Guard at the Vatican. It was considered the "right thing" to do in those unsettled days, when the Popes were none too happy on their throne and a solid troop of young Protestants was a welcome stand-by in case of emergencies. Pius IX, who was then Pope, was generally believed to have the Evil Eye, which, of course, does not presuppose wickedness in the person having it, but quite the contrary. My Father used to say that when the Pope showed himself to the people it was curious to see them extending their first and fourth fingers as a precaution.

Much as my Father disliked travelling, he was fond of fishing, and also liked staying with French friends in France. I was only nine years old when I first went to Norway. In those days children were expected to make themselves useful, and did! I drove myself in my own little carriage just like my elders, and did most of the cooking. Norwegians then believed mushrooms to be poisonous, and not only would they not eat them, but even refused to cook them, so it fell to me to do it, for they were in thousands on the banks of the rivers, and Father was very fond of them. I collected them while my family fished, and I flattered myself then that when put to it I could fry mushrooms or cook an omelette with anybody.

Until my Father's death in 1913 only twice in my life had I been separated from my Mother for more than a fortnight. I lived her life and was required to adapt myself to her requirements, and to a lesser degree to those of my Father, in a manner that is unknown in England amongst the young people of the present day. They would not tolerate it, and

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rightly so, for the despotism of the old towards the young, intentionally or unintentionally, tends to become greater, not less, with time.

Only once do I remember our parents going abroad without taking any member of their family with them, and then it was so far from being a success that they never tried it again.

An invitation had come for them to go to stay with some friends in Norway for the fishing, and the description of the weight and number of fish the party were catching daily made my Mother and Father determined to accept. They had not much time to spare, but calculated that they would just be able to get a fortnight on the river before being obliged to return to England, for they had already invited a party of friends to come to stay with them when they got back.

Father might have been going away for a two years' voyage to the North Pole, judging by the amount of luggage he took with him; getting the two of them off meant no end of fuss and bother for every soul on the place, followed by a blessed calm when once they were safely put into the train.

We had just over three weeks while they were away, during which time we came down very late for breakfast and were hideously unpunctual for every meal, but nobody minded. The butler had shut himself up in his room with the *Winning Post*, and bothered neither himself nor anybody else. The cook and the footmen fished for eels in the river, and the house-keeper and the maids let the dust accumulate inches deep everywhere.

Mother was a great letter-writer; I always got one letter from her by every post, and generally two. She had an irritating habit of writing orders for the house-

hold on stray bits of paper, the backs of old envelopes and so on, which were posted to me by guards and porters and pilots and odd people like that, and reached me from still more odd addresses.

We gathered that the fishing had been a sad disappointment. No sooner had they arrived than the river either came down in a torrent or else dried up, I forget which, and the fish wouldn't look at a fly or anything else. It seemed that Mother and Father had had quite enough of each other's society, and were looking forward to getting home. At any rate, they gave us minute directions, telling us the name of the ship on which they had taken their cabins, the day of its arrival at Hull, their train, and even what they wanted for dinner on arrival.

As the day drew near, the house began to show signs of great activity ; Mrs. Roberts, the housekeeper, had not exactly the voice of the turtle, but it could be heard all over the place—after “ those girls,” as she expressed it, while the dust of their efforts rose to the sky in clouds. In the garden the mowing machines were going all day, while in the stables things were positively humming.

As to ourselves, we filled every room with flowers, and had the dogs washed under our own eyes by the odd man ; after which the poor brutes spent a miserable morning tied up to the legs of the billiard table to prevent them rolling and getting dirty again.

In great style the family coachman drove down to the station, but returned empty-handed. No sign of our parents, no telegram, nothing ! The carriage spent all that afternoon and evening going backwards and forwards to the station. All in vain !

The following day it was the same thing ; so I read aloud all the letters I had received, to see if possibly



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I had made a mistake, but no ! I had made none, the dates were there, clearly written for all to run and read, or rather read and run.

At the end of three days we began to send out telegrams, at first only one or two, and then in all directions—to shipping agents, and Consuls—anybody we could think of. We cabled to the fishing lodge ; the reply came back—both Father and Mother had left as arranged for Bergen, and since then had not been heard of. At Hull they told us the steamer had come in, but they were not amongst the passengers ; no shipping office had heard anything of them. The Consuls could throw no light on the darkness.

At the end of a fortnight I was nearly at my wits' end, for the servants began to be very disturbed. Mrs. Roberts was the most depressing ; she was convinced that my parents were dead, and thought it dreadful that we should go about in bright colours when, according to her, it was only befitting we should wear black and consider ourselves orphans.

The head keeper came up every day, and then twice a day, to ask for news, and talked darkly about " My birds." But our real anxiety was the cook, who, in involved French, delicately expressed, gave us to understand that he thought either Monsieur or Madame or both had run away with another Monsieur or Madame or both—names unknown—and, that being the case, he had a cousin in France who would be glad of his—Auguste's—services, and didn't Mademoiselle think perhaps—— I knew whatever happened I mustn't let the cook leave, so I explained that in England it was generally understood that in the case of a married couple only one should run away, the other staying at home to grumble and think of nasty things to say in the witness-box, and of how much the

other side could be made to pay up in damages. I drew the cook's attention to the fact that in this instance both our parents had disappeared, and that married couples can't, and don't, run away with each other.

To add to my troubles, the party who had been invited to come to stay with us began to write saying what train they would arrive by and so on. I wrote back in fear and trepidation, and tried to explain the situation so far as I knew it. There were about sixteen of them, mostly old. They were furious, and said so, as if it were our fault!

At last, after three weeks, just as we were going to put a notice in the papers and buy expensive mourning, a cable reached us from the far north of Norway, almost at the North Cape.

It was only when they reached home that we really understood what had happened. It appears Mother and Father had arrived at Bergen late at night, only, of course, in Norway during the summer months it is never dark, but almost as light at midnight as it is during the day. They took a boat, and with their luggage rowed out to their steamer that was lying at anchor in the bay. There was just one man on deck, the night watchman, everybody else had been asleep for hours. Father hailed him.

"*Nordenskold*," shouted Father.

"Ya, ya," replied the man.

"I thought our steamer had a red funnel with a black band," said Mother.

"Well, what do you call this one?" asked Father, who—according to Mother—was exceedingly sleepy and cross.

"I call it a black funnel with a red band," said Mother.

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"I don't," Father is reported to have replied, adding that "he hoped he wasn't absolutely a fool, and hadn't lived part of his life on the sea for nothing," and so on.

In the meantime, the boat had drawn up alongside the ship, the luggage had been taken on board, and the night watchman showed Father and Mother their cabins. They turned in as quickly as possible, and soon were as fast asleep as the rest of the people on board.

Mother said she dimly remembered hearing the anchor pulled up, but nothing happened to disturb them. They both got up for breakfast, went into the saloon and, as usual in that charming country, bowed politely as they took their places at the table. Father remarked that they seemed a sulky lot of people on board. The young Norwegian lady on the other side of him had turned a deaf ear to his efforts at conversation, while Mother had been equally unsuccessful with the gentleman beside her.

After breakfast things came to a climax. Father spoke to an old gentleman on deck, who was not only unresponsive, but downright rude; he said something about people coming uninvited on to a private yacht, thrusting themselves on to a pleasure party who didn't want them.

Father told him to go to the devil, or words to that effect. Upon which the old gentleman was so angry he nearly lost his teeth, and Father said he didn't care tuppence if he swallowed every tooth in his head.

There was a dreadful upset. The Captain was sent for, and then for the first time they found out that they were on the wrong ship. They were on the *Torden-skold*, instead of the *Nordenskold*! The pleasure party were furious; they refused to land Father and Mother, who perforce had to go where *they* wished, and pay

through the nose for the privilege of doing so. They were carried *nolens volens* up to the north of Norway. None of the pleasure party would speak to them; they didn't for a moment believe it was all a mistake! Not *they*! *They* knew better!

There was no means of sending a cable to us and, not having their family with them, there was nobody on whom they could relieve their feelings, except each other, and the night watchman, who fled at the very sight of them.

Father's version of what happened was exactly the same as Mother's with the names reversed. Whichever way it was, I never saw either of them in such a chastened spirit as they were when once more they returned to the bosom of their family—so chastened were they that we did not dare to say a word. As the servants say, we "knew better."

The best time for fishing on many Norske rivers used to be from seven to twelve in the evening, for, of course, in those high latitudes it is never dark during the summer months, and you can see to read at midnight. I used to be sent back quite alone to put myself to bed, and I remember now being found by my parents sitting on the hard wooden edge of one of those most uncomfortable Norske beds, with very little on and the tears running down my cheeks, hugging my little nightie in my arms, and four kind good women standing round me, trying to take away my little garment and repeating constantly in Norwegian, "Little girl, you are too young, you do not understand; we take off our clothes to go to bed, we do not put them on!" In those days all girls wore the beautiful costume of the country, and their jackets were bright with silver buttons—all gone, I believe, now.

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It was not luxurious travelling, but the sport was wonderful. Some of the lakes high up amongst the mountains had never had a fly cast upon them until my Father and Mother went there, but getting to them was not easy. I remember one day fording a river, deep and icy cold, of that peculiar milky-green colour which showed it came straight from a glacier. My Mother and my Cousin, who was travelling with us, rode on pillion saddles—horrid things like a bony arm-chair, fitted sideways on to the pony's back, and upholstered in velvet and brass nails, with a little wooden shelf for one's feet. They were most uncomfortable, and like driving in that detestable and now almost extinct vehicle, a wagonette; anything interesting that happened was sure to take place behind one's back, where one couldn't possibly see. My Father had a man's saddle, and I rode sideways bareback or on a man's saddle, if there happened to be one available. On this particular day I was riding bareback, sideways on the off side, luckily for me. Had I been sitting on the near side, as I generally did, I should probably have been drowned, for my pony fell, taken off its feet by the swift current; fortunately I was washed clear of the pony and landed on a rock some way downstream, to which I clung till I was pulled out. In a few minutes my clothes were frozen stiff, and I was made to walk the rest of the way, some miles over very rough country, to keep the circulation going in my poor little body.

I wonder if Norwegian beds are more comfortable now than they were then? They used to be about five feet square, with a solid plank about six inches high on all four sides to prevent one falling out. They were all very well for people five feet high, but hideously uncomfortable for anybody taller than that, while to

cover one, there was a thing like a bun filled with feathers and a foot thick; the portion of one covered by the bun was boiled by the heat, and the portions that were not were frozen. The beds in Germany and Austria used to be much the same when I first went there.

Any description, however short, of the expeditions on which we were taken is of necessity also an account of my Mother's life, and any account of her would not be characteristic unless I mentioned "Jemima," her white rat, who for years was an honoured member of our family circle and always travelled with us wherever we happened to be going.

Jemima (called Jimmy for short) was bought by my brother Fred for ninepence in High Street, Eton, because he thought she was being ill-treated. A day or two later Jimmy arrived at her future home, her little head and long white whiskers sticking out of my brother's overcoat pocket.

During the previous holidays there had been a painful episode with my Father, connected with a grass snake, which went to church with my brother and somehow escaped during the sermon. So Fred presented Jimmy as a gift to our Mother. It was an admirable idea, for Mother at once took her to her heart and they became inseparable friends.

The next thing was to introduce Jimmy to the dogs. This had to be done with great tact. It was carefully explained to them that she was not an ordinary vulgar rat, but a privileged person, to be given the full liberty of the house and the undisputed possession of the wood basket where the large logs were daily stored for the hall fire. The dogs perfectly understood; they never touched her, while later on Jimmy would bully them in an unblushing manner.

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Jimmy was very timid at first. The log basket was very high and lined with zinc. Jimmy sat on the top of it, balanced on her hind legs and tail, with her little forepaws in the air, and her long white whiskers trembled as she listened anxiously, ready, at the least hint of danger, to drop into safety amongst the big logs below.

When Mother was ready to go upstairs to her room, she would call "Jimmy" and tap on the floor, for Jimmy, owing, I suppose, to her pink eyes, was very short-sighted, but her hearing was excellent. "Time to go to bed, Jimmy," Mother would say, and Jimmy understood, for she would always follow and often precede Mother to the door. She never crossed the open if she could help it, but always skirted round the wall, keeping in the lee of the furniture. Once through the door she led the way upstairs, and very hard work it must have been, for she was barely six inches long, without including her tail, and the oak stairs were high. I daresay the exercise was wholesome for her, for Jimmy was well nourished. She would plant her elbows on the top of a step and then heave herself on to it, always turning round at the landing halfway up to make sure Mother was following.

One day a musical enthusiast came to stay; he sat down to Mother's American organ, but not a note could he get from it, and no amount of blowing had any effect; it was completely dumb. A tuner was sent for and requested to see what was the matter. I shall never forget his face when he demanded to be taken to Mother, and produced two large plates full of cold potatoes, biscuits and lumps of sugar; poor Jimmy's entire store collected "against the winter."

When Mother took her family abroad, Jimmy went also; she did not see much of the various countries,

## Norway

for she travelled in a tin biscuit-box padded with hay with a few holes punched in it; she ate her way out of anything else. Once in the train, Jimmy, of course, was let out, and played about, sitting on our shoulders and tickling our cheeks with her long whiskers. Other passengers did not appreciate her much, but as none of them ever travelled in a carriage with us unless absolutely forced to do so, we were not often troubled with them.

At one time in Norway there was a dreadful accident; we thought Jimmy was killed. She had been playing about on a balcony with us. Perhaps she was on the shoulder of one of us who suddenly leaned forward and upset her? At any rate, Jimmy fell eighteen feet on to the hard ground below. We rushed down, and I picked her up. She lay limp in my hand with her eyes shut. Mother burst into tears; she was convinced Jimmy's back was broken. I was not so sure; there was not the feeling of a dead thing about her. Sure enough in a few minutes' time her whiskers began to quiver and she opened her eyes. For a day or two she was rather stiff in the joints and seemed rather muzzy in the head, but after that was as lively and as well as ever.

It was always our fate that something should go wrong whenever a Bishop happened to be staying with us, and they came pretty often too. Whenever there was a Confirmation or anything of the kind in the neighbourhood, the Bishop offered himself to us. I think the cooking attracted them, for I have never found the "Cloth" indifferent to the culinary art, and rightly.

One evening a Bishop was staying in the house, and was, of course, sitting next to my Mother at dinner. Mother always took a keen interest in whatever was going on at the moment; she was soon deep



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in a discussion with the Bishop about some diocesan question or other.

"Excuse me," said the Bishop, looking horrified, "I am afraid——"

Mother glanced down, and discovered that Jimmy had dragged a slice of beef off her plate and on to her dinner napkin, and was carefully licking off the gravy.

"Only my white rat," she remarked.

Jimmy's end was tragic ; it happened all in a moment. We were sitting one warm summer's evening having coffee after dinner on the terrace. It was one of those evenings all too rare in this country, warm and still and full of the scent of flowers. Jimmy was playing about at our feet, very lively and very happy.

There was a sudden rush, an owl swooped down, seized her, and in a moment carried her off. It was a merciful ending, and death must have been instantaneous, but Mother was broken-hearted for a long time afterwards.

Another characteristic of our Mother was her love of birds and animals of all kinds, though she never bought a pet in her life. The wild things about the place had gravitated there ; they had generally been brought in as orphans to be taken care of, or had been wounded. I can't remember how Cockie, a white cockatoo with a salmon-coloured crest, came to join our party. He was very good-tempered with us and with anybody he knew, though strangers were advised to keep well out of the way of his formidable beak. I remember a stupid visitor teasing him. He was told over and over again not to do it, but took no notice. Cockie stood it quite a long time, and then suddenly made his beak meet through the palm of the hand of our guest, who barely thanked us when we

bound him up, and seemed to consider that he had been badly treated.

Cockie used to sit on the back of Mother's chair at dinner; he was quite good, talking to himself all the time in a low husky whisper and taking the greatest interest in the various dishes as the footman handed them to Mother. He would stand up on tiptoe and stretch his neck out as far as he could, so as to get a better view of what was in them, but he never tried to eat the contents, however delicious, but waited till dessert time, when he got his share of almonds and raisins, which he loved.

Of course Cockie knew our own footmen quite well, in or out of livery, which in our case was black with yellow waistcoats and brass buttons. One day a relation came to stay, bringing his own footman with him, a gorgeous creature with white silk stockings and a crimson plush waistcoat. As we were about twenty at dinner, the strange footman was giving our people a helping hand, and was taking his turn at handing round the various dishes. Cockie had not seen such a peacock before. He never paid the slightest attention to ladies in bright-coloured evening gowns, but this footman was too much for him. Whether he thought he was a thief come to steal the forks and spoons, or a rival parrot, goodness only knows. Nobody saw Cockie gently sidle off Mother's chair and drop on to the floor, nor did we suspect him of stalking the footman from under the dinner-table. Suddenly there was a scream from Cockie, and a howl from the wretched footman, who bolted frantically round the table, trying to keep his white silk calves from Cockie, who was pursuing him with his beak open, bouncing up and down with his wings spread out, making dabs at the footman's legs. Un-

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fortunately when the architect designed the dining-room, he had, for the sake of symmetry, made two of the doors practical ones and two dummies leading into cupboards. In his terror the footman rushed at a cupboard door which was locked, and frantically beat upon it, trying to get through. Father was furious, our butler nearly had a fit, and I laughed so much that I could hardly come to the rescue. When finally I carried Cockie off, the poor old bird sat on my arm and really talked to me in his own language, explaining, I believe, that he could not have two of the parrot tribe in the same house, and that he had felt it his duty to expel the other one.

Personally I quite believe that birds talk, and that when parrots speak our language they know what they are saying. Cockie used to fly about the garden, and his greatest joy was to sit in the cedar tree and call the dogs. "Twinkle, Twinkle," he would yell, with great excitement, imitating us when there was a wild rat about. The dogs would hurry up, eager for the fun, and then Cockie would jump about on his branch, look down at them and really scream with laughter, while the disgusted dogs would go away with their tails between their legs, aware they had been made ridiculous.

Mother and I were one day staying with a well-known bachelor. Rich, a charming man, with an equally charming property, he was beloved by all ladies, whether with or without daughters to marry off. There was a large party staying in the house, and Sir Edgar—now, alas! dead many years ago—suggested that, while the male visitors were out shooting, the ladies might like to see a most wonderful and accomplished parrot belonging to the butler. The butler, I may say, was a most important person, who not only

ruled in his own particular sphere, but was reported to rule his employer as well.

Of course the ladies said they would be delighted, and about eleven o'clock the butler came and told us the parrot was ready to receive visitors. Down we went to the housekeeper's room, where the parrot was sitting in his cage with his head on one side, chewing his claw and regarding the company with an intelligent black eye like a shiny boot-button. The butler told us the bird could talk like a Christian, and even sing one line of a song: there seemed no end to what the bird *could* do, but, alas! he evinced no desire at all to entertain us on this occasion.

The butler put his red nose near the cage and invited the parrot, in dulcet tones, to have a bit of sugar. There was no response. Then a slice of apple was brought; the parrot took not the slightest notice of it, continuing to gaze at us with his boot-button eyes, but saying nothing.

The butler got into despair; he was well aware the whole thing was becoming a farce, so, after offering the bird everything he could think of, and all in vain, he said: "What does poor Cockie want?"

For the first time the parrot showed signs of animation: he removed his claw out of his beak. "What does Cockie want?" he repeated in a clear voice. "Cockie wants a drop of gin!"

Of course the bird knew what he was saying; I am quite certain he did.

The two most interesting pets we had were the old rook and Corby, the carrion crow.

The old rook was rescued out of a ditch with a dreadful gunshot wound in the wing. Mother saw him as she was driving along, and sent a groom to catch him. The poor old rook, of course, didn't

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understand it was for his own good, and struggled to get away, and the groom didn't understand why he should be required to dirty his smart top-boots for the sake of a common black bird. With the aid of Mother's pocket handkerchief and mine and the carriage rug, the rook was safely brought home, and his wing dressed; but though he got quite well, his poor wing never recovered, and he could only hop, he never flew again.

The carrion crow had fallen out of his parents' nest, and they, having no head for arithmetic, I suppose, never found out that he was missing. We picked him up almost dead from starvation; from the moment he got home he began to eat, and never again willingly stopped doing so except from repletion. He used to begin calling at daybreak for raw meat, which we poked down his throat with a match-stick. Corby, as we called him, was blooming like a rose and quite fearless when the old rook arrived, and they were introduced to each other. They immediately became great friends; proof being that they went off to bed together in a Noah's Ark sort of tree, close to the house, one of those described by nurserymen as a "choice conifer," with lots of branches right down to the ground, a warm and sheltered lodging for birds.

When Corby lived alone in the tree he had the best place on a branch up against the trunk; directly the old rook came he pushed Corby out and made him sit on the outside, which was not altogether playing the game, but, after all, the poor old rook was wounded and a sufferer, Corby was not.

We often used to go and call upon the pair of them at night, as they sat side by side like two black bundles, their beaks buried in the feathers on the top of their wings—not underneath, as many people think.

"Corby," we would say very softly.

"Caw," Corby would answer in a sleepy voice—he was very polite and always replied when spoken to. But no sooner did he answer us than down would come the old rook's beak, giving poor Corby a dreadful dig anywhere within reach.

"Caw! Caw!" poor Corby would say, edging away up the branch and complaining bitterly.

"That will teach you not to disturb a gentleman when he's asleep"—we could almost hear the old rook saying it as once more he composed himself for slumber, while Corby would sidle back, glad of the company of the grumpy old rook during the dark hours of the night.

The two lived on scraps of all sorts left from breakfast. They ate almost anything—sausage they liked particularly. The one thing that did disagree with them was kipper. We did not find it out at first, and let them have a good meal of it. Half an hour afterwards they were a distressing sight. They had hopped up to the very top of their tree, and sat there hunched up like passengers on a channel steamer, their feathers all ruffled and anyhow—they were past caring. With their heads sunk in their shoulders they sat quite still, except when one or the other would open his beak as wide as it would go and lurch forward. As a bad sailor myself I felt grieved for both of them.

The rook never got tame enough to come into the house, but Corby always did when he was invited, and often when he was not. Once, and only once, when he was sitting on the back of one of our chairs at luncheon time, a visitor gave him some sherry out of his wine-glass. The result was dreadful; Corby's head rolled about as if it were tied on with string, while at the same time he shut up the lower lids of his eyes

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with a sort of tipsy wink, and finished up by falling off the chair and lying on his back on the floor.

Father and Mother were scandalised, while the footmen were so demoralised that they had to go out into the passage to laugh, pursued by the enraged butler.

The moral is excellent, and would surely appeal to prohibitionists. After Corby had got over the headache which doubtless followed, he took the lesson to heart. Never again would he touch a drop of wine, and at the very sight of a wine-glass would edge away.

Corby was very inquisitive, and often exceedingly naughty—on purpose. A gardener would bed out a line of little plants. Corby would watch him with great interest, and then, at a discreet distance away, he would begin on his own account, pulling out each plant one after the other as fast as he could, and keeping all the time a sharp eye on the gardener. The moment he saw that the gardener had seen what he was doing, he would fly away to a safe distance. He knew perfectly well when he had done wrong, it didn't require bad language from the disgusted gardener to tell him that.

In the housekeeper's room there lived a canary, a dreadful bird, long and thin, with a most penetrating voice. One day it escaped. There was much lamentation in the housekeeper's room, where its voice was appreciated. By way of beguiling it into coming back, its cage, full of sugar and other dainties, was put out in the garden, where the canary looked at it and flew away in the opposite direction. Not so Corby, who was much interested. He had never seen a cage before. He walked round it, looking at it first with one eye and then with the other. At last he came to the little door, which, of course, was open.

Corby at once made up his mind that the right thing to do was to get inside, which he proceeded to do, pushing and squeezing himself in; for, of course, he was many sizes too large. Once inside he had to sit all crooked, with his tail bent round in a manner which must have been exceedingly uncomfortable. He spent the whole day there very grand, and rather hungry. When it came to the evening, he wanted to get out to go to bed, and had no end of a struggle. He called to us to help him, but it was very difficult, and when we finally succeeded, he was very cross, and scolded us as if we had been to blame.

Owing to Corby I thought I had lost for ever a very nice diamond-and-sapphire ring given me by my Father. Corby had hopped through my open bedroom window on to my dressing-table, and before the maid or I could stop him, pounced on the ring and swallowed it, or perhaps, more accurately, I ought to say had packed it away in his cheek; then, winking at us, hopped quickly to the open window and sailed away across the Park. Of course I thought I should never see my ring again, but I was wrong. An hour later Corby flew back into my room, where he was received with cries of "You are a naughty bird, a thief," and so on, by the indignant maid. Corby looked at her, opened his beak and put down the ring upon the table. He had only taken it away to play with and show to his friends.

The old rook after some years came to a tragic end. A horrid visitor brought a horrid dog with him when he came to call, and while the visitor was ringing the front-door bell the horrid dog killed the old rook on the lawn.

As for Corby, he survived the first pairing season all right; he was worried and anxious, but that was



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all. The following year a young lady crow appeared. She sat in a tree in the garden, shameless thing that she was, and, like a second Delilah, she beguiled Corby away. If he had lived in these days he would, no doubt, have explained it was the sex call, and I suppose we should have understood and sympathised. In those days we had never heard of such a thing; we summed up Corby as an ungrateful bird, and were hurt when he and the young lady crow circled round and round in the air and flew away together.

## FRANCE

### I

As a child I preferred France to Norway, principally, I think, because my brother Fred went also and I had somebody to play with. We used to stay with great friends of my Father, the Baron and Baroness X——, who had a large property on the edge of the Landes, not very far from the Pyrenees. The Château was old, and had a wide moat round it full of frogs, large and succulent, who made night hideous with their croaking. The Baroness was not at all averse to eating them, nor indeed were her guests, who had no stupid prejudices about food; so Fred and I were often sent down to catch enough for a dish—which, I may explain, means a very large number, for only the hind legs are eaten, after being carefully skinned. In the summer-time we delighted in the job. Armed each with a long stick with a string at the end and a hook baited with a pink rose-leaf, we sat at the edge of the moat; a cabbage-leaf between us filled with strawberries, culled by our particular friend Chéri, one of the under-gardeners. Up would come the frogs, temporarily disturbed by our advent, and sit amongst the water-lilies, with their elbows spread out, enjoying the sunshine and the warm summer air. Then Fred and I would each select the fattest we could see and dangle a pink rose-leaf before his bulging eyes and large yellow mouth; a moment later he was jerked up into the air, to be removed for execution by

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the amiable Chéri. The Curé belonging to the parish was very fond of what he called sport ; he used to come and help us. Dear old man ! He was elderly and fat, and wore a shabby *soutane* and an old black hat. He despised a rod and line, and was armed with a ridiculous little bow and arrow. Looking something like a dilapidated Cupid, he would stalk a particular frog and take deadly aim. Considering the skill required he was a wonderfully good shot, and great was the joy when the poor frog was pulled in hand over hand by the string tied to the arrow, while the delighted Chéri would say, “ *Regardez le petit diable, comme il saute !* ”

Occasionally the great ones of this earth, our elders and betters, would come and take a look at us ; generally it was Mademoiselle Marte, who was the Baroness’ lady companion, and had a dog’s life of it. She came to see if we were behaving well and not up to mischief. Poor Mademoiselle Marte ! She was tall and bony, with an enormous appetite ; she ate twice as much as anybody else and never seemed to get any fatter. We children rather liked her—at least we didn’t dislike her, we knew the type so well, exactly like the governesses we had at home, a succession of French or Italians who wrestled with my education throughout the year, and with my Brother during his holidays.

Mademoiselle Marte had a romantic admiration for one of the guests staying at the Château, known to us as Monsieur Charles, a cousin of the Baroness, I believe. He was a blond beauty, and wore loud checks and his hair *en brosse*. We considered him middle-aged ; now I believe he must have been about twenty-three. We had also summed him up in the slang of those days as a “ softie ” and a “ muff,” and

strongly suspected him of trying to show off at our expense. At any rate, we took a great dislike to him. He used to come down to watch us frog-fishing, occasionally honouring us with a remark which, if nobody else was there, we pretended not to understand, "aggravating" children that we were. Our great object was to get him to shout at us, which, after repeating a remark three times, he was naturally inclined to do. That constituted the game. Immediately we ceased saying "Pardon, Monsieur," pretended to grasp what he meant, gravely informing each other—in English—what Monsieur had said, which, of course, we also did if we saw our parents coming.

One day Monsieur Charles stood watching us with his soft felt hat cocked over one eye, holding a cigar between two fingers like white sausages, and leaning elegantly on a stick so bristling with knobs it looked like the spine of a fish. Mademoiselle Marte had come down to see what we were doing; at the sight she clasped her claw-like hands together, and gazed at Monsieur Charles with adoring eyes. "Mon Dieu! quel aspect mâle!" she said.

The Baron and Baroness had no children of their own, but there used to be quite a number of relations and friends staying with them when we were there. They kept early hours. At 6 a.m. everybody was up, and by seven the younger visitors would be playing tennis, while the Baroness, in a cross between a tea-gown and a dressing-gown, with her hair in two long plaits down her back, would be running about the house. Her voice could be heard all over the Château, giving orders in the kitchen and pantry, taking a look at the laundry and kitchen-garden, feeling the chickens before ordering them to be killed—nothing escaped her. If any of her male visitors encountered her during those

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strenuous hours they said "Good morning," but were careful to say it all over again when they met officially at *déjeuner* at twelve o'clock. By that time Madame had changed—with her clothes—and had become a delicate, fragile, clinging-ivy sort of person, a type even then beginning to be considered old-fashioned in France.

I remember one day there was an expedition arranged to see a church or a castle, or perhaps both. There was great fuss and excitement, for we had a long way to go, partly by road and partly by rail. There were about a dozen of us—all the party went. I don't know if Fred and I were taken because we were particularly good, or because they did not dare risk leaving us behind. At any rate, we went. We left very early, and about midday had a huge luncheon, and afterwards went to see the sights. The Baroness had a large rose-coloured veil streaming down her back, and wore a pair of very high, very shiny black boots, which seemed to be very tight and certainly had very high heels. Anybody who has ever tried sight-seeing in tight boots over French cobblestones will feel for that poor lady. At the end of the day she was heaved into the high French railway carriage in a complete state of prostration, and lay in a corner demanding, in a shrill, peevish voice, that Mademoiselle Marte should come at once and give her "un gros baiser"; and there we sat, we two small Britishers, in that hot and dusty railway carriage, with our eyes glued on the exhausted and dishevelled Baroness, while Mademoiselle Marte slobbered over her and kissed her first on one cheek and then on the other, in a fashion that disgusted us, brought up as we had been to consider kissing a revolting fashion, limited to babies and such-like, who couldn't help themselves and knew no better.

Expeditions were much *en vogue* then, and we were taken all over the country. One day we went to lunch at the Château of the famous de Montesquieu and still inhabited by his descendants. The carp in the moat were huge, and nobody knew how old they were. The water came right up to the walls of the Château, and we fed the fish with crumbs out of the windows. Of course Fred and I were desperately interested in the fish, and while our elders were being shown the library and the wonders in it, we "adjourned" to the narrow old bridge which zigzagged across the moat, so as to be easily defended, and prone on our waistcoats gave our entire attention to the carp. We had been put on our honour to behave nicely when in France, and we thoroughly realised the credit of all English children lay in our hands, so we did not throw stones nor otherwise disgrace ourselves, but it was irresistible gently to poke the fish and see what happened. It is difficult to judge of the size of fish when they are in the water, but those carp cannot have been less than two feet six and probably were three feet in length. After a certain age they seemed to stop growing in length and to get—like elderly gentlemen—larger and larger round the waist. They were quite fearless, and sucked down the crumbs we threw them with the same noise as pigs in a trough. They were so old that their backs were no longer shiny, but were like stones that had been a long time under water and were beginning to grow moss. Each scale on their backs looked the size of a sixpence, and they were absolutely destitute of intelligence. When we gently lowered a hooked stick under their chins and held it there, they hadn't the sense to go backwards, but kept on feebly swimming forward and wondering in a dull way, I suppose, why they didn't get any "forrader."

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Another time we were taken to see the vineyards that produce, to my mind, the most delicious wine there is, Château Yquem Lur Saluces. To an untrained eye there was nothing remarkable in the vines nor the soil they grew in ; but the cellars where the wine matured were wonderful. They were arranged so that the temperature should be the same in winter and summer, and the floor was covered with six inches of fine sand, raked over at intervals and always the last thing at night before the cellars were locked up to prevent any possible tampering with the precious contents of the barrels.

Talking of locking up precious things reminds me of a story connected with my Mother, who, many years ago, was one of a party who went to lunch at Stonyhurst, the famous Jesuit College in Lancashire. At luncheon my Mother sat next to Father Lomax, the head of the Observatory, and an authority on earthquakes and seismic disturbances generally. My Mother was much interested in the subject, and got on so well with Father Lomax that he invited her to go with him to see his instruments, which were deep down in the earth, where they were safe from any superficial disturbances. First my Mother was requested to leave behind anything made of steel, her keys and so on ; then she, Father Lomax and two of his staff started off. A door was unlocked and locked again behind them, they went down a flight of steps, when another door was unlocked and locked again, and then another flight of steps and another door. Before this was opened Father Lomax explained that, on entering, a small circle of light would be seen, thrown on the opposite wall. When everything was calm the light remained steady, but in the event of an earthquake it oscillated. The door was then

opened and they entered. Sure enough there was a little circle of light, but instead of being steady it was flickering in a most violent manner! Father Lomax and his assistants were greatly excited. They seized pencils and paper, took notes of the exact time and other details. In the meanwhile Mother had remarked that when she stood near the instrument it became most violent, but when she moved away it seemed to calm down in a remarkable manner. Then, and only then, she remembered that she was wearing a bustle—a thing like a steel birdcage worn under the skirt and then considered most fashionable. She hadn't the courage to tell the Reverend Father, and to this day, for all I know, there may be the records at Stonyhurst of a violent seismic disturbance, remarkable for being limited to the immediate neighbourhood and absolutely unrecorded elsewhere.

## II

The next time I went to stay in France in the particular neighbourhood I have mentioned I went with Father and Mother in early November. I was about sixteen then, and had been told to bring a side-saddle and a habit with me, as it was the hunting season, and not only was the Baron X—— prepared to mount me, but other friends in the neighbourhood had also offered to put their horses at my disposal. The Hunt consisted of five or six gentlemen, all neighbours and owners of large tracts of land. Some of this land was planted with vines; but the hunting took place in the large forests, an almost pure sand soil planted with pine trees, grown for the turpentine, of which large quantities are extracted, the turpentine flowing into little red pots attached to each tree.



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The Master was very proud of his big upstanding hounds, which showed more black and less tan than most of our English packs, and were descended from a couple sent by King James I. of England as a gift to the ancestor of the present Master, and were crossed with his own pack extant at that time. The members of the Hunt were exceedingly smart. Their Hunt coats were of white cloth, lined with crimson silk, and trimmed with gold braid, while their breeches were of crimson velvet; they wore high boots, and each carried a large horn made of brass, which encircled the body, passing over one shoulder and under the other arm. The horses were nearly all big Irish weight-carrying hunters up to fifteen stone, with Roman noses and the demeanour of bishops. Though I was tall, I was light, and they carried me like a bird.

On a hunting day we were all out by 6 a.m. I was the only lady, and must have looked very plain and severe in my black habit amongst the beautiful white and crimson coats, of which, by the way, every rider had six, two being always on their way to or from Paris to be cleaned. The first time I went out it was most exciting; the Hunt servants were French, and the huntsman encouraged his hounds by calling out, "Allons, mon Loulou, allons, mon brave." When we found, I naturally looked to the Count de V——, whose horse I was riding, to give me a lead. But instead of my being given a lead, all the gentlemen present bowed and said, "We will follow you, Mademoiselle." I kept my head sufficiently to bow in return and murmur something polite, then rammed on my hat, got well into my saddle and left everything to my horse. I considered it difficult and dangerous riding, at any rate on a side-saddle, for the pine trees were planted so near together that there was only just room, it seemed

to me, to squeeze between them, and at intervals there were wide ditches to carry off the water, generally with a bad "take-off" and a rotten landing. However, my gallant steed knew all about it; all I did was to sit tight and follow the huntsman. I felt as if I were riding in a steeplechase, for the pace was fast. When we killed, the "innards" of the roe deer were given to the hounds; then the gentlemen of the Hunt got off their horses and, standing round the dead deer, played a sort of half funeral dirge, half triumphal march on their big brass horns. To me it sounded more like a dirge than a song of triumph, but I believe the origin of it is very old, almost lost in antiquity.

Of course I was very much petted and spoilt, and the stud grooms, who were all either English or Irish, were dreadfully anxious I should do credit to them. It was funny always to speak French in the house and nothing but English in the stables. "Monsieur le Marquis de ——'s compliments, he has sent up two horses for Mademoiselle to choose from." I would stick my conceited little nose in the air and have long consultations in the stables. Many a good ride did I have, and delightful it was in those forests in the early morning on a lovely autumn day, with sand underfoot and the delicious fresh clean smell of the fir trees. We were generally back by twelve or one o'clock, and in the late afternoon played tennis, unless the Baron or somebody else had a *chasse*, a rabbit "shoot" inside a large enclosure surrounded by wire netting, generally a most dangerous proceeding, which even Father carefully avoided.

One day we had what was called a "Rally Paper"—so it is spelt on the old programme which I have before me as I write. It was got up by the Baroness in aid of an orphanage she was interested in. Besides the

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"Rally Paper" there were to be a fête, merry-go-rounds, *petits-chevaux*, etc., and a dramatic performance in the evening arranged by the guests staying in the Château.

The "Rally Paper" turned out to be a paper-chase on horseback, in which I was invited to ride. For days we tore up paper, while in the park the foresters dug little ditches about three feet wide and a few inches deep, on the "take-off" side of which they made a hedge of branches of fir that any decent pony could have got over. They also put plenty of chairs at each jump, ready for the ladies to sit on while the gallant riders showed off before them. When I saw all this and heard that the paper was to be put down the day before, I cried off, and though I was mounted and hacked about, I took no part in the "Rally."

When the great day came it was gloriously fine, with a sun more like August than November. The ladies wore summer clothes, and all the village people for miles round were there. The "Rally" was the event of the day. The members of the Hunt wore their white coats, and there were several officers, who rode in uniform, and rode exceedingly well, too. One in particular was a joy to look at; he rode a raking thoroughbred mare, a long, lean chestnut with a ewe neck. This *beau sabreur* led the field. Round and round they went, while the ladies screamed "Bravo!" and waved their parasols, and the peasants got almost under the hoofs of the horses in their excitement.

The "Rally" took place in the morning at about eleven. It was to be followed by a grand luncheon, after which everybody would "repose themselves" before the excitements of the evening. However, it turned out the "Rally" was over sooner than had been anticipated, and, as there was still a little time to spare

before *déjeuner*, the Baron invited us to come down and enjoy a little jumping in the "Allée" at the end of the park. This was a wide ride cut through the fir-trees and fitted up with little jumps like those made for the "Rally." The Baron was riding a French animal whom the ladies called "Viskee," a dapple grey of the rocking-horse variety. I was on a big hunter with the usual well-educated horse's dislike of larking, so, when the Baron invited me to lead the way over the jumps, I promptly, in my turn, asked the young officer on the chestnut mare, as winner of the "Rally," to give me a lead. The mare, who had been capering about as if she were standing on hot bricks, was given her head; she and her rider flew the little "obstacles," as the Baron called them, in great style, and disappeared in the distance. My horse, cheered by the sight, rose nobly to the occasion, and hardly required the "encouragement" I was giving him in the ribs with my heel. Presently I caught up the chestnut mare and her rider, and we waited for the others to join us, but nobody came.

After waiting a little time, we began to get uneasy, so cantered gently back to see what had happened. On the wrong side of one of the little fences we came upon a dreadful sight. Sitting on the ground was the Baron—a remarkably handsome man—who had evidently tumbled off on to his head, for his classic nose was flattened out sideways in the direction of his ear and was bleeding in the most distressing way all over his beautiful white Hunt coat. He was supporting his left arm with his right hand, and in heart-rending accents was saying good-bye to his friends, who were standing round perfectly helpless, imploring him to have courage. "Adieu, Adolphe, adieu, Jean," said the poor Baron. "You have been always

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my good friends. Say good-bye to my wife. I die, I die." Obviously the thing to do was to get help as quickly as possible, so the officer on the chestnut and I made for the Château. Before we had gone very far we came across my Mother, who was looking for us and driving alone in Madame's pony-carriage, a horrid four-wheeled thing in which you sat with your head about on a level with the ponies' tails. The ponies were two roans called, I thought, Blom and Chéri, until one day in the stables I found out they were Plum and Cherry.

The officer went on to break the news to the Baroness, and I went back with Mother to pick up the Baron. We found him still sitting in a heap on the ground saying good-bye, while his friends by this time were reduced to tears. He was lifted into the pony-carriage, and Mother started for home, but the sight had been too much for her, and in her efforts not to laugh she did not look where she was going, and took the poor Baron over a fallen tree, nearly tipping him out on to mother earth for the second time that day. When we got to the Château all the ladies were on the steps; the Baroness fainted straight away and the others screamed. Only one old Countess kept her head; she rushed and got a bottle of raw arnica, which she promptly poured all over the Baron's damaged face, causing him exquisite pain and removing the small amount of skin that still remained on his nose. His left arm was broken, and altogether it was a sad ending to the day's entertainment.

## MOROCCO

### I

1890

THE following year I upset my family by getting ill. In the light of later years I believe I had a bad attack of influenza, which was not then a known and acknowledged disease, as it is now. The only idea the doctors seemed to have was to pour iron and Burgundy down my throat, and as I got no better, but steadily worse, they evidently thought I was going to die on their hands, so they ordered me off to a warm climate, and Mother took me to Algeciras. On the way I threw first the iron and then the Burgundy out of the railway carriage window, and began to improve at once.

Algeciras we found a dull spot, and Mother was bored to extinction, so we moved over to Tangier, where there was certainly much to interest us, but the weather was abominable—gales of wind and on most days torrents of rain. There was only one tolerable hotel in those days, a horrid little place of one sitting-room with two armchairs, where a fire was lighted after dinner. The only other occupants of the place besides ourselves were two old English ladies of the dried-up variety who seem to live for ever in continental hotels. These ladies used to eat their dinner as fast as they could, and then each would seize an armchair, draw close up to the drawing-room fire, and leave us to spend the evening perched on kitchen

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chairs in the cold and draughts at the other end of the room.

When we discovered that this was their regular practice, we determined to have our share of the fire and comfortable chairs, so we concocted a scheme. In those days Tangier was a wild spot, and, as everybody knew, there had been the dead body of some poor thing lying on the rubbish heap outside the town wall. Whether it was still there, we didn't know, for we avoided the place, but that didn't matter. In a carefully studied, matter-of-fact voice I said to Mother, "What a pity it is that nice skeleton outside the wall should be wasted; it would come in so handy at home. It wouldn't take much boiling down," I continued, with one eye on the old ladies, who were beginning to look a little agitated. "With a good fire and a big saucepan. I saw one in the kitchen." It was too much for the elderly ladies, they bolted like rabbits, and triumphantly we took undisputed possession of the vacant armchairs and the fire.

The Sôk or market-place was an endless source of delight once you had got over the dirt of it. There were native women, closely veiled, sitting like bundles of grey rags on the driest spots, selling bread, oranges, eggs and thin chickens. There were donkeys with heavily-laden panniers picking their way daintily amongst the stones and the mud, and camels, nasty-tempered as they are, behaving like gentlemen at meal-times. Their barley was poured out for them in a pile on a piece of matting, and the camels lay round it in a circle, with their long legs folded tidily under them, and each ate the barley in front of him, never attempting to gobble up all their share and steal their neighbour's, as the dogs did at home.

One day we had an adventure. We had been

warned it was not safe to be out alone after dark, so we were coming home after a walk, when we became aware we were being followed by two evil-looking men, probably Spaniards who had come over to Tangier because they had made their own country too hot for them. We walked as fast as we could, pretending we did not know they were there, but the men stuck to us until we turned into a narrow lane with a gateway at the end of it. Then we saw them stop and laugh, light cigarettes and sit down on some stones. At once we realised we had taken a wrong turning and were caught in a trap. It was useless turning back, so we pushed on, and found ourselves in an old graveyard. On three sides was a high, unclimbable wall, on the fourth a hedge of prickly aloes and a high bank, almost a miniature precipice, with the sea at its foot, where we could see the people walking about on the sands, but too far below us to be of any help, however much we might shout to them. Luckily in one place there had been a sort of landslide; the aloe hedge was not quite so thick, and a mass of stones and earth and old roots had fallen down the rock face like a shoot into the sea. We realised this was our one hope. The sun was going down, so we had to be quick. I went first, cutting off some of the worst thorns with my pocket knife, and leaving hair and bits of my clothes on the others. Mother followed me. Then we chose the portion of the shoot with least stones and roots in it and, one after the other, we put our feet together and shot down. It was soon over. Bruised and a bit giddy, but uninjured, we picked ourselves up, shook some of the mud off our clothes, rescued our hats, or what was left of them, and in safety waited to see what would happen. After a little while we saw two figures, black against the blue-



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grey of the evening sky. As we had not returned, our two friends had come to look for us. We saw them hunting everywhere. I imagine their language must have been unfit for publication when they found we had escaped them.

Before long we had exhausted the attractions of Tangier, and Mother was looking for "pastures new" when, fortunately for us, we met, lunching at the British Legation, Mr. W. B. Harris, the well-known *Times* correspondent, and an authority on anything concerning Morocco. In those days he was a young man, and looked like a boy. He was just off on a trip to Mequinez, Fez and Wezzan, and he agreed to allow us to join his party. Then came for Mother and me a few days of feverish activity, while we got together the things we required—camp-beds, tents, etc. We each bought a mule, more expensive than horses, but much easier to manage in a wild country. Mine cost eleven pounds, and I sold him at a profit when I got back. We also engaged a servant, not a very prepossessing-looking person, a native of Tangier, but who had the great advantage to us of speaking a little French; he answered—when he felt inclined—to the name of Mouchtah.

Besides ourselves and Mr. Harris, a most delightful and an exceedingly clever artist, Mr. Berens, also joined the party. I still have a number of his sketches of us all, dashed off, generally, just when we did not consider we were looking to advantage. Mr. Harris, in his brilliant books on Morocco, has dealt at length with the history of that country. I only knew it from the point of view of a tripper, but what an enchanting part of the world it was thirty years ago!

We rode out of Tangier along little paths that crossed and recrossed each other as they wound amongst



THE DESERTED SHRINE OF A MOHAMMEDAN SAINT



WHERE SPANIARDS LIVED NEAR TANGIER.

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us. Also, I must explain we slept each on a narrow and rather rickety camp-bed in a bag made of blankets bought in Tangier, inside of which were our sheets, made of thin cashmere, which we had brought out with us from England.

One day it was Mother's turn for the bath. I was lying more than half asleep, enjoying those last precious minutes of a warm bed before getting out into the cold of the early morning, when I was thoroughly awakened by Mother's voice from the bath at the far end of the tent, calling to Mouchtah that he could not come in. And, sure enough, I was aware somebody was untying the cords that fastened the flap of our tent just by my head. "Go away, Mouchtah," I said in French, taking it for granted it was our servant. "Go away," shrieked Mother from the bath, but, on the contrary, the person outside, whoever it was, was obviously coming in. "Stop him! Send him away! Get out! Send him off!" shouted Mother in a frenzy. But anybody who has ever slept in a blanket sack on a camp-bed knows that to get up in a hurry is just what it was impossible for me to do. A moment later, through the flap of the tent, appeared the face and long white beard of an elderly Moor, followed by a large foot in a yellow slipper, then the rest of the elderly Moor, clad in a long white cloak. There was one despairing yell from Mother, who put out a bare arm and grasped the only thing within reach, a sunshade, half the silk of which had been burnt off by accident the previous night. Mother put the good half up before her, and sat in the bath, blue with cold, with her face sticking out amongst the bare steel bones at the top—a sight that made me laugh so much that I was incapable of doing anything.

In the meantime the venerable Moor, bowing

politely to us both, had squatted down on the floor and produced some gifts—a bowl of milk and some eggs and a thin and struggling chicken. Of course he saw no difference between unveiled European women walking about out of doors or in their tents, so, notwithstanding Mother's shrieks, he kept on bowing and pushing the chicken into my hands. The climax was reached when Mr. Harris awoke to the fact that something unusual was up, and I heard him shout to Mr. Berens, telling him to get his revolver and come to the ladies' tent, upon which Mother's yells redoubled, and we both shouted that they were not to come. "What is the matter, then?" asked Mr. Harris. We replied there was a man in our tent, and would they call him out. "But if there is a man there already, why can't we come?" asked Mr. Harris. When the excitement had subsided and the old gentleman had gone, it turned out that one of his wives had received great benefit from Mother's doctoring, and he, the grateful husband, had come to thank us.

## II

Probably the most important person, and certainly the most imposing in our caravan, was the old soldier, for he being with us was a visible sign to all and sundry that we were influential people, under the direct protection of the Sultan. The soldier had been one of hundreds of poor pilgrims packed like sardines on a ship that took them through the Red Sea, suffocated by the heat and probably very sea-sick as well, to worship at Mecca, the sacred place of all others to Moham-medans. In virtue of this the old soldier was treated with great respect by our servants. From a distance he was most picturesque, in scarlet robe something like

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a dressing-gown, with a white cloak worn over it, and high yellow boots. His gun, which he always carried with him, was, like the others owned by the natives, six feet long in the barrel and bound up at intervals with strips of shining brass. Once, in a rash moment, Mr. Berens asked if he might be allowed to fire it off. The old soldier seemed delighted, and thrust the gun into his hands with joy, but retired gracefully himself and took refuge behind a tree. Mr. Berens pulled the trigger, and the next moment found himself on his back on the ground. He got up carefully, wondering if his shoulder was broken or only bruised black and blue, while the soldier came up smiling and thanked him volubly, for he explained that the gun had not been fired off for several months, and he had been afraid to try it himself. The old soldier was a bit of an epicure in his way; he told Mr. Harris that stewed cat was the most exquisite dish one could eat. Mr. Harris replied that owl cooked in sand was even better. The old soldier replied that might be so, but he hadn't tried it himself.

Travelling as we were under the protection of the Sultan meant that, should any accident happen to us—should we be murdered or our mules stolen, or both—the Sultan would then come down on the village on whose land we had been camping at the time and demand our value in money or kind. If the fine were not paid at once, then one or two of the village elders would be taken as hostages and clapped into prison, and if kindness (!!) had no effect, a couple of their teeth—if they had any—would be extracted per day, or a finger or two cut off, and sent to their relations until the fine was paid up.

The result was that when we camped, the people of the nearest village, the one responsible, turned out in

force to protect us, and a wild set of ruffians they were. Often they sat absolutely on the outside skirt of our tent, jabbering to each other in Arabic most of the night, except now and then, when one of them would jump up and shout to a friend, "Selim, son of Sidi Mohammed, sleepest thou? Let not sleep overtake thee," and then, to show he was awake, Selim, son of Sidi Mohammed, would jump up and yell in reply, often letting off a gun that sounded as if it had been loaded with tin-tacks. Directly we had moved on out of the confines of their village, these very people would prime their guns and set off to see what pickings they could make out of us the following evening, which, of course, No. 2 village knew perfectly well, and turned out to guard us accordingly.

The first part of our journey took us along the coast to Arzila and El Araish. Arzila was a lovely spot, groves of palms and little enclosed orange gardens sheltered by hedges, one mass of periwinkle in full bloom. When camping out, a great deal of one's pleasure depends on the weather. My diary describes leaving Arzila in pouring rain and having our tents nearly blown down on our heads that night. The tent-pegs would not hold in the sodden earth, and we had to sleep on our clothes to keep them dry. It seems extraordinary that a delicate girl should have thrived under these conditions, but I did. I think the secret is plenty of milk and eggs and good wholesome food, and fresh air by day and by night, and, of course, I was blessed with a good constitution to begin with. Moreover, though North Africa is very wet in the spring, it is not the damp, chilling cold of England.

After leaving an uncomfortable camp on the sea-shore, we marched along the coast with the rain pouring

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down, until in the distance we saw El Araish ; but between us and the town was a wide river too deep to ford, and the only means of getting across, an ancient-looking punt, was on the far side. Near us was a wreck, the remains of an unfortunate ship cast up on the beach by some great storm. We took shelter under the lee of it and ate our luncheon. At last, after waiting for a couple of hours, the spirit in the Moors in charge of the punt was moved to come over for us, and then the fun began. Nothing would induce the mules to get into the boat ; they opened their mouths and stuck out their forelegs, while our muleteers had no grip on the slippery mud with their flat slippers. It took a long time to get all the animals on board, and then we were poled out into the stream, thick with mud from the heavy rain and looking like railway-station cocoa. Somehow or other we reached the other side, and arrived at what was nothing more nor less than the town rubbish-heap. It was too awful ; between us and the town wall was a small hill of refuse : dead dogs, old orange-skins, pools of filthy water and mud everywhere. The mules were landed, and floundered about, and we were obliged to follow. Mother and I tottered along, jumping from stone to stone. When at last we reached the town wall we found it was fortified. At intervals there were square holes, out of which poked the muzzles of ancient guns, but the garbage hill had grown since they had been placed there, and to do any execution they would have had to penetrate some forty solid yards of disgusting rubbish.

Once through the town gate, we found ourselves in the usual narrow congested streets, only a degree less dirty than outside the walls, and alas ! the Governor of the town had no empty house for us, for, of course, there was not such a thing as an hotel or

inn of any kind in the place. Finally the sight of us, dripping and very cold, melted the heart of the kind English Consul, an elderly bachelor, who gave up his bedroom to Mother and me. He had a Spanish housekeeper and two negro servants, who would keep patting me on the back and hanging beads round my neck, while the Spanish housekeeper gave me a pressing invitation to go with her to see a cow killed just round the corner. She thought it would be such a nice entertainment for me!

The poor old Consul hadn't much to do in El Araish, but he told Mother he made a little money selling canary seed, exporting it to England and elsewhere. Mother and he made great friends, and well she might, for we were most grateful to him for taking us in. In return Mother showed sympathetic interest in his ailments, which were many and peculiar, and even opened our one and only bottle of brandy which we took with us for emergencies, and under the influence of which the Consul's descriptions of his maladies became more lurid than ever.

We were very glad to get away the following day, and rode through cork woods and masses of wild flowers. The rain came on again, so we had another wet camp. Near us was an Arab village of brown hair tents. The women were tattooed on the face, arms and chest, and wore large flat silver clasps and coral bead necklaces. Both they and their tents looked remarkably dirty, and we avoided going into them. As it was, we were much afflicted with what we politely referred to as *Pulex irritans*.

Every evening we had visitors, the leading lights of the villages, who came to stare at us and drink green tea. Not only did they hunt their own fleas amongst their clothing in the most shameless manner, but



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always left us a legacy of some of them when they departed. Every night before getting into our blanket sacks we used to scatter a little Keating's. The result was illuminating! Out used to come the young and agile members of the flea family, followed more slowly by the older and bigger ones. Then came the bugs, again the young ones first and the big ones last of all. Once in our sacks we would sprinkle more Keating's round our pillows and on the edges of our sheets and, as a rule, slept untormented.

Our route now lay across the great plain that extends up to the foot of the Atlas Mountains. It is very rich soil, and even with the primitive ploughs used in those days, which looked as if they dated from the time of Abraham, the Moors produced two crops of corn per year and with better cultivation would produce even more. Once we saw a camel, a cow and a woman all harnessed together pulling a plough. The soil was stiff in most places, and very slippery after the rain. Where everything had to be carried on the backs of mules, donkeys or camels, this was a serious matter; mules managed to keep up tolerably well, so did the donkeys, but camels are only suitable for dry countries, and on slippery ground their feet slide about, and they split up and the beasts die. Along the main caravan routes their dead bodies lie all over the place, some recently dead, some skeletons, and in all stages between. On these dreadful remains fed any number of jackals, who used to howl round our camp at night. The villagers kept large numbers of savage, half-starved dogs for protection; they barked too, and the noise all night was terrific. We were so sleepy that nothing woke us except the braying of a donkey; why, I don't know, but we never could sleep through that. One evening in the dusk I was walking alone not far from

one of our camps, when I passed close to a dead camel. It was difficult to walk anywhere without passing some dead thing, but out of the inside of this particular camel came two dogs, or perhaps they were jackals. I did not wait to see, but, horribly scared, I made for home at record speed, and not having an eye in the back of my head, of course ran much further than I need and much faster too. Mother, who was watching me, was much amused.

Scattered about on the plain were the little villages, near which we camped for protection and food. The native bread was always good, and made in flat cakes like very large muffins, and the eggs, though small, were generally fresh. The chickens were always tiny and very tough, but as they were walking about up to a couple of hours before they were cooked, that was not to be wondered at.

Directly we arrived at a village and the tents had been put up, the head men would come to call on Mr. Harris; then began the ceremonial tea-drinking, a most important function. First the tea-pot—rather a small one—was carefully warmed, then about two dessert-spoonfuls of green tea were put in, a little boiling water was poured on to it and drawn off, then the tea-pot was almost filled with lump sugar, about six leaves of mint were added, and the pot was filled up with boiling water. Next, one of the tiny cups was filled with the tea, which was poured back into the pot to mix it, then the little cup would be half filled again, and this the tea-maker drank to show he had not added any poison. Then the rest of the company were served. The Moors say, “Drink twenty-seven cups and you will feel happy!” Green tea thus prepared was very good, something like a hot *crème de menthe* liqueur.

Owing, I suppose, to the rain, the whole country

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was alive with frogs, and eating the frogs were quantities of storks. In every village there were storks' nests built on the roofs of the houses. The storks themselves were bulging with the frogs they had eaten, and their waistcoats stuck out like those of aldermen. One day we saw a curious sight: some large hawks fighting a quantity of storks. The hawks swooped down on the storks, striking at them, but the storks did not seem the least alarmed, we could hear the clack of their beaks as they hit back at the hawks. We could not make out why the hawks were so angry, but concluded that they probably had some young ones on the ground. The water tortoises too were everywhere, but smelt so nasty we left them severely alone.

### III

One night we camped close to a rather attractive village, and saw about twenty convicts being taken out for exercise; they were chained to each other by rings round their necks, and some of the most dangerous had rings round their ankles as well. They did not look unhappy and seemed well fed, but I can't forget even now the look of a huge negro chained to a small, evil-looking old Jew. They carried the long chain they were all attached to in their hands to ease the weight on their shoulders. They were all of them murderers, I believe.

Another time we lost our way. Mr. Harris and Mr. Berens had ridden on ahead, leaving us and the baggage mules and the servants to follow under the guidance of the old soldier. He it was who lost the way and took us much too near to the fanatical town of Mouley-Idriss, a town in which, in those days, no European had set foot—in fact, it was not safe for

Europeans to be seen anywhere near it. Of course we knew nothing of all this, and our camp was pitched in a really lovely spot close to the Roman ruins of Velubelis, described, I believe, by Hanno, of which a few magnificent columns still remained standing, and blocks of stone, evidently the remains of a great flight of steps leading down to pools and baths, of which only a little stream of clear water now remains. There were olive and fig trees, under which were our tents, and a glorious view thence over the plain to the mountains beyond, with the ruins in the foreground.

Mr. Harris and Mr. Berens had an anxious time before they found us that evening, and when they did, there was a hurried consultation as to what should be done, for it happened, we learned, that a number of a famous tribe of ruffians called Rifi, from the mountains between Morocco and Algeria, had come out on the war path, and only the night before had swooped down and stolen some cattle and mules from a village near our camp, the headman announcing that he believed the brigands to be still lurking in the neighbourhood.

These Rifi are very interesting people. They are great fighters, and are fair with blue or grey eyes. Some people, we were told, believed they were descended from a shipload of Northern Europeans who many years before had been wrecked on the shores of North Africa; we were also told that when they went out to a big fight the women remained in the rear, and should any man turn tail and run away, that they branded him on the chest with a hand dipped in henna, and after the battle was over, he was put to death.

Really I think the origin of these people is obscure. Some ethnologists believe them to be akin by race to the ancient Iberians, the Etruscans and the extinct

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Guanches of the Canary Islands ; others maintain that they are but ordinary Berbers, amongst whom there has always been a moderate percentage of blonds, and who are descendants of the ancient Numidians. Certainly they show in their present stubborn resistance to the French and Spanish the indomitable spirit of the ancient Berber people.

Mr. Harris was inclined to think it more than probable that these Rifi would try to steal our mules during the night, if we remained where we were, but, on the other hand, it was already so late in the afternoon that to move camp was a difficult undertaking, so finally it was decided that we should remain and risk it. Great precautions were, however, taken : forty men from the village turned out to guard us, lanterns were hung from the trees, and Mother and I were made to promise not to leave our tent on any consideration until Mr. Harris himself should come for us.

That night was even more noisy than usual. The forty guards chattered and prayed incessantly and banged on old tins. At about 3 a.m. there was fearful excitement : whether there was an attempt to stampede our mules or only a scare, I never knew, but Mother and I got up and put on our coats and boots and clutched the only weapon we had between us—a little rook rifle. However, nothing more happened, but Mr. Harris was glad to get away early the next morning and move to a safer place. We were sorry to go, it was so beautiful.

As we moved off and rode close to the ruins, we saw a flock of goats, and in charge of them was a boy in a long white cloak with a wreath of myrtle and some other green shrub round his head. He looked too wonderful, and absolutely in keeping with the great columns behind him. Mouley-Idriss itself is on a

rock, very steep on three sides, and our servant Mouchtah, a Moor and a Mohammedan, going into the town in a pair of European boots, was stoned by the people and had to beat a precipitate retreat. Mother and I noticed that everybody we saw carried weapons—even men ploughing in the neighbourhood were armed with guns and daggers.

Soon after this we arrived at Mequinez. The town walls were the most remarkable part of it, we thought. At a guess they were forty to fifty feet high, and of a pale yellow-ochre colour; at intervals were great gates with lovely purple and blue tiles, and marble pillars probably pillaged from Velubelis. The whole town was in a most tumble-down condition, but the streets were not quite so disgustingly dirty as we had expected.

The Jews in the town were most interesting. The Moors treat them with haughty arrogance, and they slink about in a shame-faced manner like beaten curs. The men wore tight black coats and black skull-caps, which the Moors obliged them to have made with a crease in them, as if the owner had been knocked over the head; and on each side of their faces hung down black greasy curls. We did not see many Jewesses in Mequinez, but I once saw seven or eight on a little boat crossing from Tangier to Gibraltar. For some reason or other these Jewesses were not allowed to, or at any rate never did, show their own hair; instead they wore black silk imitative "fronts," parted in the centre and drawn down over their ears. We saw these ladies arrive on the boat, dressed in very gaudy clothes, evidently their best; they disappeared up a sort of hen-roost ladder on to a small upper deck. As usual, it was a rough crossing, and down below it became exceedingly wet, and, added to this, being myself a miserably bad sailor, I thought I too might

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be more happy—or at least less miserable—on the upper deck. So Mother and I climbed up the ladder to have a look. On the little open deck, barely the size of a small dinner-table, were the Jewesses, all frightfully sea-sick. They sat huddled up on a narrow bench, with their sham hair fronts hanging about in disorder, while at intervals one or another, galvanised into action, struggled to her feet and hung over the one bucket placed in the centre of their circle. Ill as I felt, the sight was irresistibly comic, and thankful we were to scramble back to the lower deck and the company of the poor wet cattle.

The tiresome part of our stay at Mequinez were the crowds that pressed round us whenever we showed ourselves outside the house that had been lent us by the Governor of the town. The main streets were so narrow that two laden donkeys could hardly squeeze past each other, and when we were there nobody could move at all, including ourselves! My height and the colour of my hair were the principal excitement, but Mother's eye-glass ran me very close. The eye-glass was handed round from hand to hand, and all those lucky enough to have a peep through it vowed that they could see Mecca!

One day we were invited into a rich Moor's house. It appeared that his wives were longing to see us. The house had no outside windows: there was a large courtyard in the centre, with the rooms built round it. They were very dark, and we were glad to be taken up the high narrow stairs on to the flat roof, which is the playground of the women, and given up to them. There we were offered the never-failing green tea and some unappetising cakes and sweetmeats, while the women crowded round us feeling our clothes and asking innumerable questions, not one of which we



THE SÔK, TANGIER.

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could answer ; for, of course, nobody could interpret for us, no man daring to come anywhere near.

In the middle of it all, a huge negress appeared, and, without a moment's warning, seized me, threw me across her shoulder and ran off with me. I was horribly frightened, and yelled and banged her bullet head with my fists, but she took not the slightest notice, and skipped across the roofs of the houses as if I weighed nothing at all. When we took a flying leap across a street and I caught a glimpse of the people walking below I thought it safer to leave off thumping her head, and presently I was put down quite gently, and realised that I had been taken to a house to be shown off to some other ladies. Of course, I hadn't understood : how should I ? After more pawing of my clothes and, I suppose, conjectures as to what hair-dye I used, I was taken back the same way, and very glad I was to get back.

Many of the women were decidedly pretty ; some were as fair as southern Europeans and some coal black, pure negro. The old women were all of them hideous. We couldn't make out which were wives and which slaves, but guessed that the better-dressed ones were probably wives. They wore garments like dressing-gowns of some vivid colour. A lady would wear orange, and over it a net arrangement embroidered with large pink cauliflowers, probably made in Manchester ; whilst round her waist would be a wide band of silk and gold as stiff as a board. If any lady ever went out, which might happen twice or three times in her life, she would be closely veiled, and so swaddled up in white cloaks that she would look like nothing but a shapeless bundle, and all the time would be guarded by several large and lusty slaves.

One day outside the town we were fortunate enough

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to see some of the Sultan's bodyguard practising powder-play. There were quite a number of negroes amongst them, and all were well mounted, with saddle-cloths of the brightest colours, mostly pink or red. The horses were barbs, ridden on terribly sharp bits. The men would form up in line, brandishing their guns, their white cloaks flowing round them. At a word of command they galloped headlong at the high blank wall of the town, reining in their horses at the last moment, and whirling them round on their hind legs when they were almost touching the wall.

### IV

From Mequinez we moved on to Fez. From a general point of view both towns were much alike. The shops in the bazaars resembled cupboards in a wall, with a pale-faced Moor squatting on the floor of each, looking as remote as the Buddha. The principal goods were Manchester cottons, European candles and sugar, and native cloth and rough silks. Also, there were native shops where slippers were sold, of all sorts and sizes, from big rough ones made of strong leather to small ones embroidered in silk, for ladies.

One day we walked along a road, seventy feet wide, laid on a foundation sixty feet high. It was begun in 1600 by one of the Sultans, and built by Christian slaves. It was never finished. The slaves who died while the building was going on were buried in the great wall where they fell. As we walked along we saw many holes, and bones where portions of the sides had fallen away. We never saw the slave-market, but it was still in existence when we were in Fez. A boy of fourteen, we were told, could be bought for about

four pounds. The highest-priced slaves never came into the open market, but were sold privately, or were bought in Constantinople by trusted servants for those able to afford them, as were the expensive wives for the wealthy Moors.

I was told a story of how a rich Moor had sent a trusted servant to the East to buy the most lovely Circassian that could be found for the said Moor's eldest son. The English lady who told me said she had seen the girl, and that she was quite lovely and only about fifteen. Unfortunately, before the girl was handed over to the son the old father saw her, and at once decided to keep her for himself, which he did, and added her to his already extensive harem. Somehow or other the son heard how he had been "done out" of his lovely wife by his horrible old father. The son made a dreadful scene about it. "Come and see me to-morrow," said the old father. The son came back the next day. "She is under the orange trees," said the old man. "I had her strangled last night. Bismillah! I cannot have all this fuss made about nothing."

The Governor of Fez, at the time we were there, was, like the other inhabitants, very anti-European, so, instead of giving us a comfortable empty house to camp out in while we were in the city, he gave us one of the worst. After a couple of nights of great discomfort, Mother and I were invited to stay with a Moor, a friend of Mr. Harris, and we moved to his house. The Moor was a rich man. We were shown up into a long narrow room with three windows looking into the courtyard in the centre. There were low divans round the walls, which were hung for four or five feet up with velvet and gold hangings, and we were told that all this was at our disposal for the night. Much

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pleased, Mother and I spread our blanket sacks on the divan, undressed and went to bed. We had hardly extinguished our candles when we heard peculiar sounds outside our room, as if several fat pigs were being heaved up the narrow stone stairs, and indeed such was the case. The door was thrown open, and the wives and the slaves and most of the children of our host came in to spend the night with us. It was awful. The head women, the principal wives, we supposed, were hugely fat, which is considered a great beauty in Morocco. We had to lie on our clothes to keep them away from their henna-stained fingers; they all talked at once, and, worst of all, it was Ramadan, when all Mohammedans fast between daybreak and sunset, so these ladies made up for it by eating all night. Large dishes of mutton were placed on the floor; the ladies squatted round and ate with their fingers. The amount they put away was amazing, and when they were not eating or staring at us, they were praying. Prayer carpets were spread on the floor facing the orthodox way, towards Mecca, and the prayers began. As anybody who has ever been in a Mosque knows well, there is a great deal of bumping of the forehead on the floor at stated times. I hope I may be believed to be speaking the truth when I say that those fat ladies had to be held down by the heels to prevent their rolling over when they prostrated themselves on their carpets.

As good luck would have it, Mr. "Bibi" Carleton was in Fez when we were there. Born and bred in the country, speaking Arabic like a native, "Bibi" was one of the most popular and picturesque Europeans in Morocco. He told us about a sacred well in a grove of palm trees about fourteen miles out of Fez. It appeared that very few European men had been to

the place and no European women, so, of course, Mother and I longed to see it, and we begged "Bibi," as he was universally called, to manage it for us.

After a little persuading (for it was a risky thing and really dangerous if we were found out), "Bibi" settled to take us. He decided we were to go in disguise as the Moorish wives of a Shereef, or descendant of the Prophet, who wished to pray at the Sacred Well; but we were first made to promise not to speak one word from the time we left until we got back to Fez, and afterwards we were not to tell a soul where we had been.

Mr. Berens could not go because of his moustache. Mr. Harris had none, so he was to go in Moorish dress as a holy man attached to the household of the Shereef. Mr. Harris was not so proficient then in Arabic as he afterwards became, so he also was not allowed to speak, and had strict orders that, if things looked dangerous, he was to pretend to be mad, Mohammedans having great respect for mad people.

When the day came Mother and I were up at 6 a.m., and were taken to the house of another Moor, a friend of "Bibi" Carleton. Here we were to leave our European clothes and put on Moorish costumes. A black negro slave, clothed in green silk, was there to dress us; she was a trained dancer, and seemed to glide rather than walk about the floor.

Mother and I were shy of taking off all our European things, so the slave put on the Moorish clothes on the top of our own under-garments, and very sorry I was later on, for I was nearly smothered by the heat.

If I looked half as funny as Mother, we must have been a comic couple. She had on a gorgeous dressing-gown of orange silk, held in round the waist by a wide belt of stiff gold brocade, over which she wore a white

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woollen cloak with sleeves. Next the black slave tied her head up in a long strip of white cotton, leaving her only a narrow slit to look through; and over all this came another white woollen cloak with a hood to go over her head which covered her completely, all, that is to say, except her top boots, which were of bright yellow leather elegantly embroidered in purple silk.

I was dressed much the same, only, being slim, the gold belt I wore went five times round my waist, and when the slave had finished with me, not only did I feel half suffocated by the bandage over my nose and mouth, but also, thanks to it, by no manner of means could I admire my high boots, which, like Mother's, were canary yellow, bought on purpose in the bazaar the day before.

When we were ready I defy anybody to have recognised us. We shuffled downstairs with great difficulty, for we could not see where we were putting our feet, and were met by Mr. Carleton, armed to the teeth, an impressive array of knives and revolvers being stuck in his belt. He grasped Mother by the arm and led us into a dark stable, where she was hoisted on to a mule—not her own—and sat astride on a high peaked saddle with her knees nearly up to her chin, for native ladies ride with very short stirrups. I was then put on to another mule, and in dead silence we filed out, following “Bibi,” who led the way, brandishing a gun. Two or three strange Moors, servants of “Bibi's” Moorish friend, ran beside us, and Mr. Harris, also mounted, brought up the rear.

For two and a half hours we rode under a broiling sun without saying one word—not even did I exclaim when my mule floundered into a bog hole and we had no end of a struggle to get out again. At last we

forded a river, and saw beyond it a grove of stately palm trees—we had reached our destination, and very lovely it was.

When we arrived at the edge of the palm grove, Mother and I got off our mules, and, acting up to our characters of Mohammedan ladies, we shuffled to a tree and sat down cross-legged on the ground under its grateful shade, while Mr. Harris, acting his part of a holy man and, if necessary, a mad one, stalked solemnly away and sat down under another tree.

“Bibi” had disappeared, but soon returned and, seizing her arm, led Mother along, while I stumbled after them. We crossed a stream on the trunk of a palm tree, not easy under the circumstances, and saw a dome-shaped stone building with a door, round which were half a dozen fanatical-looking Moors. “Bibi” talked loudly to them in Arabic and, opening the door, pushed us through it and closed it behind us.

Mother and I found ourselves in a sort of cave, in the centre of which was a pool of exquisitely clear warm water with several large tortoises swimming about in it, whilst round the edge was a ledge of rock on which we undressed—at least I did; Mother took off merely her white woollen cloaks, and sat in the orange garment, while I sported in the pale green water and played with the tortoises.

It was truly delightful. Thanks to the thick stone walls, it was half dark and deliciously cool, the light filtering in through a veil of creepers and vines at one side, the water seemingly pouring in from the solid rock.

I was thoroughly enjoying myself when we heard a noise outside, shouts and angry voices. Quickly I scrambled out of the water, and luckily had got on most of my clothes when in dashed “Bibi” Carleton,



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looking very grave. In a low whisper he told us to come out at once; evidently it was serious, for, grasping Mother's white cloaks, he began to pile them on to her; he seized the white strip of cotton and bound it round her forehead, then twisted it round again and over her nose, squashing it flat and half smothering her.

Meanwhile I had huddled on my things. The noise outside got worse and worse, and, seizing Mother, "Bibi" dragged her out, I following as best I could, stumbling along in my canary-coloured boots. Under the palm trees just in front of the door were a circle of about thirty villainous-looking men, wild as hawks, all clutching guns and staring at Mr. Harris, who was capering about in the centre, pretending to be mad.

"Wow-wow, hi-hi!" yelled Mr. Harris, leaping about in a distracted manner.

The audience grunted and shook their guns in the air.

"Hurra-hurra, ha-ha!" shrieked Mr. Harris, getting desperate and dancing a mad sort of jig, nearly losing his Moorish slippers as he frantically played his part.

At the sight of us he gave one more war-whoop, one more caper in the air, and struggled after "Bibi," who, clutching Mother with one hand and brandishing his gun in the other, was pushing his way through the mob, shouting at them and elbowing them out of the way.

How "Bibi" got Mother over that palm-tree bridge I don't know, but what with anxiety and terror I as nearly as possible fell off the slippery trunk into the stream below. Somehow I managed to shuffle across safely, and, like bundles of old clothes, we were pushed on to our mules by "Bibi," and the terrified

Moorish servants and I only began to breathe freely when several miles of rough country had been put between us and the ruffians at the well. Of course we did not know what had happened. It was only when we were safely back in the house in Fez that we dared to ask, or that "Bibi" could tell us.

He then explained that, as the pretended wives of a Shereef, he had got permission for us to enter the men's bathing-place. Women, as the inferior sex, were as a rule only allowed to bathe outside.

While we were in the place another Shereef had arrived with his retainers, and was indignant when he heard that women were in the bath, and demanded that we should instantly be turned out. Apparently his threats were too awful, and his retainers' remarks were even worse. No wonder Mr. Harris had had an anxious time, realising as he did that the newcomers were highly incensed, and probably much better judges of bona-fide mad people than he could ever hope to be.

I can still see in my mind's eye the beauty of the wild flowers after leaving Fez, literally sheets of blue and yellow and purple. The blue was a wild anchusa, the yellow masses of marigolds and yellow daisies, and the purple a little flower I did not know. I also remember coffee-coloured single hyacinths and many varieties of iris. It was on the fallow land that the flowers grew and were so beautiful, for there were also great stretches where corn was coming up vividly green. Later on this corn is stored in great jars, which are buried in the ground. Mother and I going out for a walk one evening, I fell through the open neck of one of these great things, and suddenly disappeared like a jack-in-the-box; there was some difficulty in pulling me out again.

According to my diary it took us five days travelling,

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after we left Fez, before we arrived at Wezzan—or Ouezzane as it is spelt in the latest French maps—out and away the most interesting portion of our journey.

All the recognised descendants of the Prophet are Shereefs, but vary in holiness according to how directly they can trace their descent. The Shereefs of Wezzan are particularly holy, and pilgrims come to worship them from as far off as the Red Sea. Mr. Harris was a friend of the young Shereef, and thanks to him we were able to go to see this extraordinary place. The town was most picturesque. I quote from an old letter of mine describing it as I saw it thirty years ago.

“Imagine an Eastern town, all blank walls piled one upon the other, with a pale green Mosque tower here and there, placed on the side of a lovely steep mountain, covered with gnarled old olive and fig trees, with a few snow-white domes (saints’ tombs) amongst them. Imagine range after range of high mountains, with, in the far distance, most lovely snow peaks, and then you will have a good idea of what Wezzan is like.”

When we arrived we had a beautiful little palace placed at our disposal, all on the ground floor. There were no doors, except those leading outside, only curtains; divans and beautiful carpets covered the floors. Outside were two gardens enclosed by high walls, full of orange and lemon trees and roses in bloom. There were large tanks of clear running water, with gold-fish swimming about in them, just like the gardens the Persian poets write about.

We were told that during our stay all our food would be sent from the Shereef’s own kitchen, and, sure enough, in good time we saw a stately procession advancing through the garden. It was headed by the

Chief Steward to the Shereef. With measured tread he paced along, and behind him came our dinner, carried on the heads of eight or nine slaves who followed him in single file. Each course was carried in a large red pottery dish with a plaited straw cover to keep the contents hot. We four were requested to sit in a circle on the palace floor; a wooden tray was placed in the centre and a dish upon it, but before the cover was removed two servants came round with a jug of warm water and a basin and towel; we each had water poured over our hands, which were then wiped dry. Then Mr. Harris broke it to us that we should be expected to eat our entire dinner with our fingers, and that in high society the right hand only is used. I may say at once that eating with one's fingers is neither graceful nor satisfactory. Large pieces of bread were handed round, and we were told it was considered good manners to soak a piece in the gravy of a kid roasted whole and then convey it to one's mouth, which was easy, but kooskoosoo made of wheat something like very dry semolina covered with sugar and grated cinnamon would, I am sure, try anybody. The most difficult dish of all for us clumsy ones was partridges' eggs poached in oil; the oil was hot and the eggs were fearfully slippery, and all through that trying meal the steward stood watching us, and our servants hung round glorifying the Shereef of Wezzan and speculating on the sumptuous repast they would enjoy of what remained after we had finished.

The following day the Shereef came to call on us and we were solemnly introduced. I was very much on my best behaviour, having been warned by Mr. Harris that on no account was I to laugh, whatever happened. The Shereef was about twenty-two years of age, tall, thin, clean-shaven, and decidedly good-

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looking. He had great natural dignity, and gave one the impression of a person who all his life had been worshipped as a saint, which, of course, was the case. For though this young man was not the head of the family (his father was that), he still was a very great personage, belonging to a family who were absolute autocrats and who could snap their fingers at the Sultan himself. One realised all that when one saw his people crawling up to him on hands and knees to kiss the hem of his robe. To my surprise, he did not always wear the sacred green; when he did, he wore over it a long white cloak embroidered in white silk, with a white hood drawn up over his head.

Directly the Shereef arrived dinner was served. The same tray was put down on the lovely carpets, and the same big red dish placed upon it; then the Shereef squatted down and said a prayer, after which Mother and I sat down one on each side of him with what grace we could, and dinner began. The first dish was a kid roasted whole. The Shereef tore off a piece with his fingers and ate it. Then, while Mother and I were revolving in our minds how and where to attack the dish ourselves, the Shereef tore off a second bit and pushed it into Mother's mouth. With a horrified foreboding of what awaited me, I watched the saint licking his fingers, and then, sure enough, another piece was thrust into my jaws! I took one agonised glance at Mr. Harris and swallowed it; but after that, to our unspeakable relief, the Shereef considered that he had honoured us sufficiently, I suppose, and for the rest of the meal we were allowed to feed ourselves as best we could with our own fingers.

Once or twice the palace band, consisting of two drums and two trumpets—great long things that made the most hideous noise—were ordered to play for our

benefit after dinner. Unfortunately the Shereef was always there, so we could not "tip" the band and get rid of it, but had to sit drinking cup after cup of green tea while the drums were banged and the trumpets snorted and growled in a manner that would have put to shame five German bands. It effectually put an end to all conversation, which, as the Shereef spoke only a very little French, having once been in Algiers, was something of a relief. Socially we were evidently a success, for the Saint came every day and dined regularly with us; suitable topics of conversation were, in consequence, liable to become exhausted. Of course the first thing he asked was whether both Mother and I were Mr. Harris's wives, or only one, and if so, which? But as every Moor we had met asked that, we were by this time accustomed to it. Then followed speculations many and varied as to our ages and value in the matrimonial market. Mr. Harris, of course, could say what he liked, and the Shereef certainly did, for we did not understand a single word of their conversation.

We had one object of great delight to the Shereef, namely our little rook-rifle. He was so pleased with it that Mother gave it to him when we left. We heard, afterwards, that either he or his brother, feeling dull, took to "potting" the slaves with it as they crossed the palace courtyard, killing one or two, and wounding a number. I don't know if this was true, but quite possibly it was, for the Shereef spent a night in camp with us after we left Wezzan, and while we were sitting at dinner, there was a great commotion outside. The Shereef asked in Arabic what was the matter, and was told a slave had let loose a horse, which was galloping wildly about the camp. "Have the man beaten to death," ordered the Shereef, going on quite calmly

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with his dinner. Luckily Mr. Harris understood what had been said and told us, whereupon Mother and I begged for the man's life and saved him.

One morning I awoke very early, which was unusual for me. Mother was always awake first. Tired of washing in our rubber bath, I had a great longing for a plunge in one of the enchanting tanks in the enclosed gardens. The sun was just up. Everything was quiet. A gentle snoring in the distance indicated in that doorless palace that the two gentlemen of our party were still sleeping the sleep of the just. Clad in a long white native cloak and armed with a bath towel, I gently opened the big door leading to the first garden and peeped out. There was no sign of a living soul, only the sunshine and the roses and the intoxicatingly delicious scent of the orange-blossom. Mother stayed on guard at the door while I went out and made my way to the largest tank in the centre of the garden. I stood on the edge of it for one delicious moment before slipping off my cloak and plunging in. It was then that I heard a long "Ah—a—a—" and for the first time looked up. In the gallery seats at the top of the high wall were a row of interested spectators, who, luckily for me, had, in their excitement, given themselves away just in the very nick of time. I have always regretted that I never had that bath; but perhaps on the whole it was just as well.

One day we were invited by the Shereef to go out hunting, or rather coursing, with him. In the early morning he came himself to fetch us, and fine he looked, with his impassive, hawk-like face, mounted on a fine black horse. His saddle was covered with purple silk, and his saddle-cloth was of the same colour; his horse's bit and his stirrups were gold, and his bridle was purple woven with gold to match. He wore a

dark blue cloak with a hood opening over a pale blue one, and was attended by about twenty-four soldiers, dressed in white, mounted on fine horses, mostly greys. They had the usual high-peaked saddles covered with bright red or pink, and saddle-cloths under them, also of some bright colour. They all carried long single-barrel guns ornamented with bands of shining brass. Besides the soldiers, there were also a motley collection of retainers of all sorts, some mounted, but most of them on foot.

It took us a long time getting out of the town, for the people flocked to kiss the Shereef's stirrups or the hem of his robe. We, riding behind him, expected every moment to see somebody crushed under his horse's feet, but nothing untoward happened. Once out of the town we scrambled up the side of a steep hill, followed by the escort and a crowd of people from the town, all greatly excited and running about in every direction. As we went along I remarked on the number of loose stones lying about everywhere; only then did I realise that we were riding over a Moham-medan graveyard, but nobody seemed to mind. Further on we came to scrub, mostly dwarf-palm and myrtle; then the six or eight large greyhounds were brought forward, a hare was put up and off we dashed. What became of the hounds and the hare, whether we killed or not, I haven't the remotest idea. In and out of the scrub I rode, holding on to my mule and trying not to ride over the good people of Wezzan who were running about almost under our horses' feet and enjoying themselves immensely. The escort were having the time of their lives, and, regardless of the hunt, were exhibiting their horsemanship in splendid style. Standing straight up in their saddles they would turn round and fire over their horses' tails whilst at



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full gallop, and though they were only firing blank charges, a good deal of my attention was taken up keeping my head out of the range of their guns.

Our days at Wezzan passed all too quickly, and so did our journey back to Tangier, through lovely country with quantities of flowers in full bloom. I shall always be grateful to Mr. Harris for a delightful experience which not only was of the greatest interest, but gave me personally a new lease of life.

### V

Many years after the time I have been speaking we went again to Tangier. This time it was my Father who was ordered away by the doctors. We leased a villa outside Tangier for a few months and, having put Father safely on board a ship in London, with the ladies' maid, the French cook and two English footmen, as well as a chest of silver, Mother and I, to avoid the sea, went by rail through France and Spain and met the ship at Gibraltar. Father had enjoyed himself immensely, telling us with gusto how he and the Captain had sat down alone to breakfast while the ship rolled and pitched about, and the other passengers, prone in their bunks, wished they were dead. Once safely at Gibraltar, our servants crawled on deck, looking very shattered, but somehow they had managed to lose the plate chest, and until it turned up, a month later, we were almost reduced to eating in Moorish fashion with our fingers.

We got the whole party safely over to Tangier and even to the villa, about three miles out from the town, the French cook and the ladies' maid both riding with their arms clasped round the necks of their donkeys and supported on either side by a stalwart Moor, for,



OUR SERVANT GOING TO MARKET.



A LANE NEAR TANGIER.

[To face p. 70.



of course, there was not a cart or a carriage in the place. The cook was a dreadful failure, an altogether chicken-hearted creature. At the sight of the kitchen stoves at the villa, arranged, of course, for charcoal, his craven spirit failed him altogether, and he retired to a wine-shop on the side of the road, where he drank himself senseless and was removed later by his Consul.

Housekeeping was by no means easy with the mixed lot of servants we had: about a dozen of them, headed by the new cook, an ancient Moor with a white beard and only two teeth in his head, as could be plainly seen when he spoke. I was the only one who could understand him, which was just as well, as all the household arrangements had been put into my hands, nobody else feeling equal to dealing with the three currencies employed—English money with the one grocer in the town, Spanish dollars for the servants, and Moorish money for the charcoal, etc., bought in the market. I paid the Moorish servants once a week, and the cook buried his dollars in a hole in the garden. He was a dear old man and really an excellent cook. We often had people dining with us, and towards the end of dinner I used to see him watching through the window, waiting anxiously for a nod from me to tell him his precious *soufflé* was all right. When we left Tangier he suggested he should come with us to England and cook for us there, which I took as a compliment.

We had a large garden stretching down to the sea, and were quite aware it was regularly used by smugglers, but thought it best not to interfere with them. When we heard a cock crowing out at sea at about 11 p.m. on a dark night, we knew that they were about. They never bothered us, but I was nervous lest they should steal our mules, and was careful to have them locked up every night in the stable, and I kept the key myself

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till morning. We bought half a dozen mules for our own riding and a pony for the marketing, and I sold them at a profit when we left.

Amongst the many delightful people in the little social circle that existed in Tangier before the Legations were done away with, Kaid Sir Harry Maclean was certainly one of the most interesting; having been Commander-in-Chief of the Moorish army for many years, he also acted as interpreter-in-chief to the Sultan, and was often sorely tried.

"Monsieur X has been away to France to get married, Your Majesty," the Kaid would explain at a reception, introducing a middle-aged Frenchman with a bald head.

"It was time," the Sultan would reply coldly in Arabic.

"His Majesty is glad to see you have returned safely," translated the tactful Kaid.

"Did he go all the way to France for *that*?" inquired the Sultan, looking at the elderly bride. "Why, in the Sôk here——"

"His Majesty hopes you will enjoy your sojourn in Tangier," the Kaid would translate, and so on.

Those were amusing days in Morocco. Numerous were the interesting people out there and numberless the good stories they told. First and foremost there was Mr. Cunninghame Graham, who, with all his distinction and charm, is as amusing to listen to as he is good to look upon, and is unequalled at telling a Scotch story or writing a South American one. Excellent too were the stories "Bibi" Carleton would tell about giants and the old man of the sea, or about the Moorish Court when he first knew it.

I remember one very characteristic of those days. It was about a poor charcoal-burner who was taking a

donkey laden with his own charcoal to the Sultan's palace in Morocco city. Just as he got near the palace he heard a terrible noise on the other side of the high wall that hid the Sultan's gardens from prying eyes. There was no doubt some dreadful accident had happened, for the shrieks were piercing. Without a moment's hesitation the brave charcoal-burner scaled the wall and dropped down into the garden on the other side. There he saw what had happened. About a dozen of the Sultan's wives had gone out in a punt for a row on the lake and had upset in about one foot of water and two of mud. One and all they had completely lost their heads, and there was every prospect that all of them would be drowned. The brave charcoal-burner plunged into the lake and, thanks to his efforts, all the ladies were saved. A few minutes later more people arrived, and the charcoal-burner was taken before the grateful Sultan, who promised him two hundred dollars, and the charcoal-burner went out from the presence seemingly a rich man.

But no sooner had he gone than the Sultan began to repent. After all, two hundred dollars was a big sum; the ladies were pretty old, and all given to quarrelling; if they had been drowned it wouldn't have been much loss, perhaps even an advantage! The Sultan sent again for the charcoal-burner, who was waiting to be paid, and again he came before the Sultan, who said to him, "You had forgotten that the penalty of looking at the Sultan's wives is death. Instead of the two hundred dollars you shall have a cup of coffee." The poor charcoal-burner bowed his head and said, "May the blessing of Allah and Mohammed, his prophet, be upon Your Majesty!" And he drank the coffee and died, for it was poisoned.

## SPAIN

### I

1895

It was sitting next to the Spanish Ambassador at a dinner-party in London in 1895 that inspired our Mother with the idea of seeing the north of Spain. The Ambassador, it appeared, knew the country well, and described the scenery in glowing terms. "Not the towns," he said (but Mother never cared about them), "but the mountains, the great barren sierras that lie between Galicia and Asturias, the Picos de Europa further east, the rivers flowing into the Bay of Biscay, the chestnut forests and the queer little villages." According to the Ambassador it was all enchanting.

Mother came back from the dinner-party full of enthusiasm, and bent on going to see for herself. Father, of course, was the sticking-point; he announced that nothing on earth would induce *him* to go, but that Mother could if she liked; but she was not to forget that a number of friends had been invited for the partridge shooting in September, and it was absolutely necessary she should be there to entertain them. Also, if she intended taking Fred with her, she had better bear in mind that he was due back at Eton about the same time.

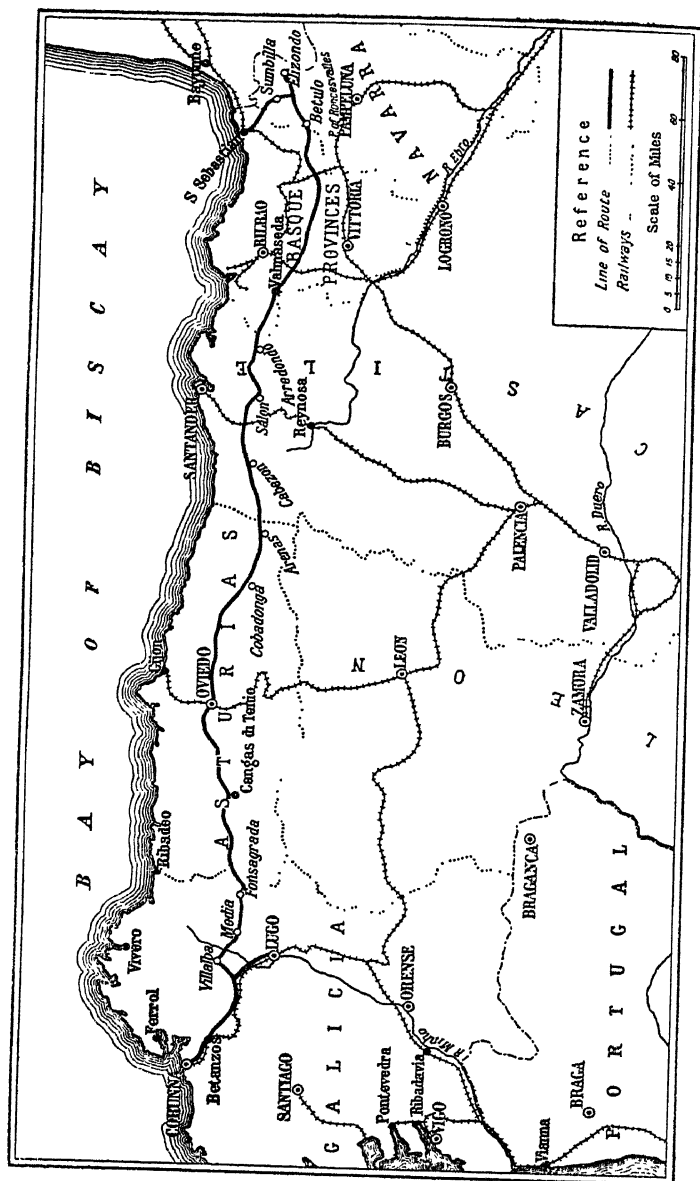
This was rather a blow. At a rough calculation the distance as the crow flies from Corunna to the

Pyrenees is about 350 miles ; there was the sea voyage out to Corunna, then the buying of the donkeys or mules, or whatever was necessary for the long ride over the mountains, and finally, once across the Pyrenees, the railway journey home. Could it be done in the time—just over two months ? A glance at the advertisement sheets of *The Times* showed that a ship was due to leave London in a week's time, calling at Corunna on her way to South America. Mother decided that it could be done ; she ordered the carriage and went out. At luncheon time she returned with the tickets for the ship, a letter of credit on which she could draw at any town possessing a bank, and two books, a Spanish dictionary and "The Easy Guide to the Spanish Language." The dictionary she gave to Fred and the "Easy Guide"—what a hollow mockery of a title!—became my inseparable companion from that day onwards till our tour was ended.

I don't remember that Fred and I looked forward to the trip with any degree of enthusiasm, but as we had not been consulted as to whether we wanted to go or not, our opinion was not of much account. Fred was still at Eton, I had just "come out," and had had my first experience of a London season. Neither of us had inherited our Father's gift for languages, both of us cordially disliked the idea of "mugging up" a new one, for not one word of Spanish did we know. We surmised that we were in for a strenuous time, for Mother never attempted to learn a new tongue ; she was too old, she said, also it was good for us to manage things, and she made a cryptic remark about travelling being an education in itself.

Our packing did not bother us much. We took saddles, some arrowroot in case of illness, some simple drugs, of which some pills, seductively disguised with





rose-water, and pale pink in colour, were the most important item; and a revolver that none of us had ever fired off or had the least intention of ever firing. In a risky country such as Spain was known to be—and even the Ambassador had acknowledged that the frontiers and the neighbourhood of the ports were unsafe—the great thing was to go about as if you were armed to the teeth, but never to show your weapons, at least not until the last moment; never let your enemy know what he is up against. The unknown is always an asset; this was our rule, and on the whole it is a good one.

We also took an aneroid, a compass, an English map of the north of Spain, and a pair of field glasses; these, with the “Easy Guide” and a little ready money, lived in my morocco leather bag and constituted my special charge.

Fred was almost as bad a sailor as I am; we literally heaved our way across the Bay of Biscay, he with the dictionary, I with the “Easy Guide” in one hand and a basin in the other. We knew that everything, even our food, depended on our being able to make ourselves understood, so, by the time we landed at Corunna, we had mastered a few easy sentences that we knew would be useful.

August is a hot month in Spain. It was the hottest of hot days when we dropped anchor in Corunna harbour and were rowed ashore. The sea was like oil, a dead dog near the landing-stage hardly moved in the water, two live ones were scratching for fleas on the jetty, otherwise there seemed no sign of life anywhere. Even the beggars were asleep. However, soon after we appeared three or four men seemed to rise out of the ground and carried our luggage to the hotel.

There too everybody was asleep; the host was

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discovered spread out on three chairs with a red handkerchief over his head. He showed us three little rooms with tiled floors and as bare of furniture as monastic cells, and then returned to his interrupted slumbers.

As there seemed nothing else to do, we slumbered too until the sun began to go down and a little wind rustled the dry leaves of the trees outside our bedroom windows; then Corunna began to awake from its siesta, and a strong smell of mingled onions and oil, rising from the lower regions of the hotel, seemed to hold out hopes of an evening meal. We made haste to go out, first to call on the English Consul to beg him to help us to find the required mules and donkeys, and next to the Bank, to warn them we should require a considerable sum of money the following day, and to learn, with some consternation, that we should have to take the whole in large silver dollars the size of five-shilling pieces, as, in the wild parts of the country through which we were going, notes would be of no use to us—the people would not take them.

We returned to our hotel just in time for the evening meal. Our host had tidied himself up considerably since we saw him first; he had now adorned himself with a collar, and conducted us with great state to the dining-room. From the noise of the conversation it was evident that a considerable number of the inhabitants of the town contemplated dining at the hotel that evening. Our entry, preceded by the bowing and smiling hotel-keeper, was the signal for dead silence. About twenty men and three or four ladies rose to their feet, bowed to us and ranged themselves round the table; we bowed in our best style in return as we took our places, all three in a row, with Mother in the centre, as indicated by the hotel-keeper. It was an

awful ordeal ; we felt every eye glued upon us. The ladies, who were fat and elderly, chewed toothpicks and stared in an unwinking, disconcerting manner. The men at first sight did not strike us as prepossessing. The young ones were of the fat white variety, the old ones only differed in being fatter still, and all wore an abundance of gold rings. Our host busied himself with the soup, while Fred and I noticed with alarm that the leading person in the assembly, a gentleman in a large white waistcoat with a gold watch-chain suspended in loops across it, showed symptoms of wishing to enter into conversation. Fred clutched the dictionary in which he was an adept at looking out words, while I clung to the phrase-book, which was of the " I have found my uncle's penknife in the garden of your aunt " variety.

Sure enough we hadn't long to wait ; the gentleman in question cleared his throat, looked in an encouraging manner up and down the table, waved a fat white hand and said he understood we had that day arrived by the ship that out there, through the window, could be seen anchored in the harbour.

Fred and I, much pleased at having understood so much, indicated that that was indeed the case.

Our friend looked round in triumph ; then he again addressed us, this time at length. We were sorely tried, but gathered he was asking us where we intended going. We replied that we hoped to ride over the mountains to France. " To France ? " He held up his hands with amazement and horror as he repeated our reply to the rest of the company, who, except when they were swallowing their food, had not ceased to stare at us.

After this we had peace for a short time, Fred and I taking advantage of it to eat our dinner, which was

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particularly nasty, while Mother expatiated on the good it did us going abroad, as we were forced to learn a language of whose beauties we should otherwise have remained in crass ignorance.

We were wrestling with a chicken, toughest and thinnest of its kind, when our sociable friend began again. This time his little black eyes were glued upon my morocco leather bag, which was hanging on the back of my chair. We understood him to ask where it had come from; at any rate we told him it came from Africa. "Where the lions come from," he said in an awed voice. "Exactly," we replied. He put his head on one side, put out his hands as if he were holding a rifle, and said "Click, click, pop, pop." Fred did the same. "Valeroso, intrépido," murmured our friend, shutting his eyes and shivering at the very thought.

Feeling we had reached the limits of our conversational powers, we took the opportunity of the effect the very name of lions had produced on our audience to get up, bow all round and escape. It was only 9 p.m., but we were going to rise with the lark, for we had to buy our donkeys and mules the following day, and knew it would be a hard one.

The road up to the Consul's house was blocked with mules and large Spanish donkeys when we turned up in the early morning the following day. The Consul saw us coming and joined us in the road, waving a newspaper.

"So you have already been interviewed by the editor of our local newspaper," he said.

"Certainly not," we replied, under the impression we were speaking the truth.

"Look at this," said the Consul, showing us a column in the paper. "Here it describes how an

English lady with her son and daughter have been shooting lions in Africa and are taking a short cut home to England via Spain."

We gazed in astonishment. "But you know," we said, "everybody must be aware we have just arrived from England, and we have not been shooting lions, or anything else."

"No matter," said the Consul; "you will never stop it now." And he was right; that story preceded us through Spain, whether we liked it or not. Lion-killers we were, and lion-killers we remained, and more than once I believe our reputation saved us from what might have been an unpleasant experience.

It was no joke choosing our donkeys from amongst the motley collection waiting for us. There were animals of every colour, shape and age. The babel of voices would have put to shame an Irish horse fair. The frantic owners, not content with calling our attention to the merits of their own animals, also abused those of their rivals. Each owner vowed his donkey was worth two hundred dollars, and all the others were dear at ten. We speedily found that the only plan was to weed out the hopeless animals and, having selected six of the most suitable for our purpose, we had a fine haggle over the price. Finally we came to terms and all adjourned to the Bank, the money was paid, and we handed over our new possessions to our muleteer, who had been engaged for us by the ever-kind Consul. He did not look a very pleasing person, but we hoped for the best.

The remainder of the day was taken up in fixing light panniers on to two of the donkeys, into which fitted our canvas yachting-sacks containing our spare clothes. The disposal of the eighty pounds' worth of silver dollars was our chief difficulty; finally we packed

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them in rolls of twenty-five in our spare boots, the leather preventing the heavy silver from wearing through the canvas of the sacks. Then we fitted on the light saddles brought from England; the bridles we bought in Corunna, but we might just as well have spared ourselves all this trouble and made up our minds to walk to France. We did not know then that, for the most part, our journey was to consist of scrambling up the steepest of hills and scrambling down again on the far side of them, riding being absolutely impossible, and the saddles themselves alternating between slipping over the donkeys' heads or tails, according to whether we happened to be going up- or down-hill.

We finally got away the next day, and a distracting process it was. Each donkey in turn lay down and tried to roll in the thick dust, and they all bit and fought each other. One, a particularly well-bred animal, as unlike an ordinary little English donkey as a thoroughbred is unlike a cart-horse, made himself conspicuous at once by his evil disposition. We christened him the "Demon." He took a violent dislike to an inoffensive grey donkey with a benign expression named by us the "Bishop." The "Demon" would sidle gently up to the unsuspecting "Bishop," and then, when our attention was taken up elsewhere, would suddenly plant his teeth firmly in the poor "Bishop's" tail and off they would go full gallop, scattering their panniers and the luggage in every direction.

Our intention had been to spend our first night at a *posada* or inn about seven miles from Corunna, but on arriving there we found a *festa* going on—a village feast in honour of the patron saint of the locality—so we pushed on a mile or two further, where we were told we should find accommodation for the night. By the

time we got there, it was almost dark, but we could see the outline of a small house standing alone. On the ground-floor three men were sitting in a sort of cellar, playing cards on the top of a wine-barrel by the light of one candle. They did not move when we appeared, but one gave a call and a woman came, who showed us a nice shed fitted with a strong door with a good lock on it, where our donkeys could pass the night. We saw them fed and watered, and then returned to the front of the house, where the men were still engaged in their game. The woman led the way up a sort of henroost ladder in the corner of the cellar, and we scrambled up after her, and found ourselves in a long narrow room, quite clean, but bare of furniture except for one small table and a very large bed ; at the far end was another small room, not much bigger than a cupboard, with a bed in it, which was handed over to Fred, while Mother and I picnicked in the large room, in which there were three windows with no glass in them, but fitted with strong wooden shutters. We were glad to see those, for we were perfectly aware we had been followed out of Corunna by three disagreeable-looking men who certainly knew, as did most of the people in Corunna, that we had a considerable sum of money with us.

The woman produced some food, not good, but quite wholesome, and we prepared for bed, pretty well tired out—at least Fred and I were. We carefully wedged the top of the trapdoor by which we got into our room, piling our saddles and canvas sacks on the top of it to make it still more secure. Fred went to bed in his cupboard, Mother had the big bed, and, after shutting and bolting securely the shutters of two of the windows, I lay on the floor with my feet towards the one open window. It was a very hot night, and



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we could not face the idea of sleeping with all the shutters closed.

It seemed to me I had been asleep only an hour or so, but really it was just dawn, when I was awakened by a slight sound outside the open window. I waited and heard it again, and this time I woke Mother. As I did so a head and a hand appeared at the window. Mother struck a match and presented our revolver, and the head disappeared; there was a crash outside suggestive of a falling ladder, followed by silence. We put out the match and closed and barred up the shutters without showing ourselves, for fear of a shot from below, and congratulated each other in having had to do with chicken-hearted folks, after all.

Next day we fully appreciated Galicia. The scenery was charming: wooded hills, rushing rivers and delightful sandy tracks winding in all directions. In places we came across quite a maze of narrow lanes with high stone walls, generally overhung with black-berry bushes covered with ripe fruit the size of grapes, and most delicious. There is an opening in the north of Spain for an enterprising jam manufacturer, though I must say other fruits there were none; later on we found figs, small and plentiful and deliciously cool, but that was in Asturias.

It was exceedingly difficult to find our way, the lanes twisted and turned and we had only our English map. We had tried in Corunna to find a local map, but there was nothing of the kind to be had. The natives too, like those in most wild places, were quite ignorant of the country a short radius from their own homes, and often we had two or three different guides in the course of one day's march, and the constant engaging and paying of them kept Fred and me busy. The guides we had to do with were, of course, peasants,

and spoke a patois, luckily with many French words in it, for which we were truly thankful. The nearer we got to the Pyrenees the less understandable became the patois, until at last we reached the true Basque country, where, as we all know, the devil lived for seven years trying to learn the language and had at last to leave entirely defeated!

The people, too, in Galicia were delightful; clad in bright colours, they all seemed cheerful and happy. We met them riding to market, the women by preference riding on the off-side of their ponies. Some had baskets of live chickens; one pony carried a woman in one pannier, while a pig balanced her in the other. We liked the Galicians much better than the people in Asturias, who were gloomy folk, clad in black; but for all their cheery spirit, I fancy life was a struggle for the Galicians. When we were there the exodus to the Argentine was just beginning; since then thousands have crossed the ocean to find an easier life in South America. Now, I hear, the wolves howl in the deserted villages and the charcoal-burners take care to be well armed. And the delightful people we met, and who never passed us without saying "Va usted con Dios" (May you go with God), are all gone and their own country knows them no more.

The first town we touched after leaving Corunna was Lugo. We left our donkeys at a village a little distance out and went in ourselves to do some shopping. We bought food and three large black cotton umbrellas, for the heat was great, and we felt we must have something to keep the burning sun off our backs. The tiresome thing was the crowd that followed us everywhere, and we were glad to get back to our village in the evening, for Lugo we thought a dull place, as nearly all the old houses had been replaced by ugly new ones.

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There seemed to be a good deal of wine grown in the neighbourhood. To go into the cellars of the little country inns was like going into a butcher's shop, for on shelves all round were what looked like whole sheep, lying on their backs, with their legs sticking up in the air, and laid out side by side in tidy rows. These are the wine-casks—the entire skins of the animals with the wool taken off. When the wine is required the string at the end of a leg is untied and the jug filled from it. The skins were perfectly cured and quite clean, and did not seem to affect the taste of the wine, but to the sight and touch—for they felt cold and clammy—were not attractive.

We rose every day with the sun and were off as early as possible; at twelve we had a midday rest, under trees and near water if possible for our animals; off again at two, stopping for the night at sunset. In most of the villages there was one moderately large house, in which we generally managed to get beds. All the houses were much the same. On the ground-floor were the stables and the living-room of the family. One could generally see several unfortunate chickens tied to the legs of the family dinner-table, literally fattening on the crumbs that fell from it. Above were the sleeping-rooms, mostly with two wooden beds in each. The mattresses were stuffed with maize leaves and there were rough but clean sheets. To our great relief, Keating's was not everywhere required, but there were exceptions. At a village called Media the dirt surpassed anything we had seen since a year before in a wild part of Southern Italy, and, as is generally the case, the people were dirty and disagreeable also. For the rest of our tour Media became a by-word for dirt, discomfort and extortion; but I am glad to say it was an exception, and as a

rule we experienced nothing but civility and kindness wherever we went.

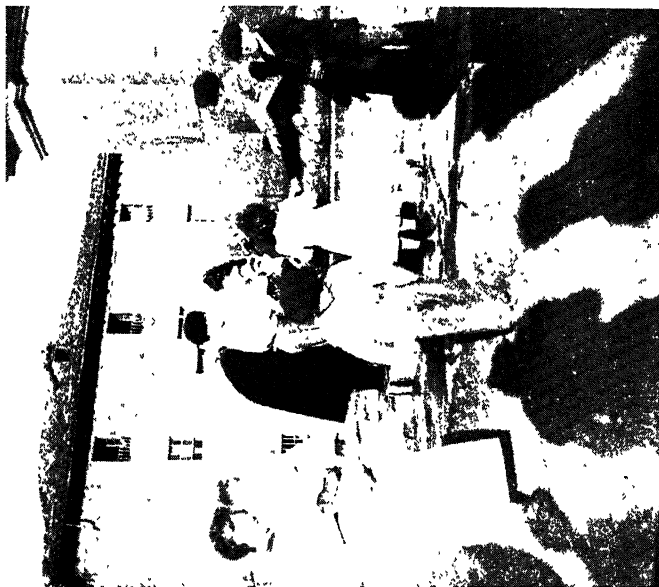
On the third day after leaving Corunna we met a superior-looking person riding a fine grey horse. He took his hat off with the usual flourish, then asked us in French if we were the distinguished travellers from Africa who were riding through Spain on the way back to England. He told us he had seen a long description of our adventures, including a vivid account of our exploits in shooting lions. The Lugo newspaper had, it seemed, copied from its brother in Corunna, and enlarged on it as well. It was too much; Fred and I felt we ought to try to put things right, so most carefully we explained how the mistake had arisen. The Señor listened most courteously, but either his knowledge of the French language was not extensive enough, or else he preferred to believe the Lugo newspaper; at any rate our efforts were in vain. He smiled most politely, and we left him, we felt, as convinced about the lions as he had been when we met.

After leaving Media our route became more hilly, and finding the way was more difficult than ever. Quite suddenly one day we came upon a deserted mine. In a little valley amongst the foothills of the Sierras we came across a wood, and thinking it a nice cool spot for our picnic lunch and midday rest, we entered it and came upon a couple of large sheds. In front of one was a wheelbarrow with some stones in it—some sort of ore, we supposed—and a couple of spades leaning up against the wall. Thinking there must be people about, we tried to find them, but the place was deserted. One of us touched a spade, it fell to the ground—a few bits of rotten wood and iron. The wheelbarrow was the same, a touch and it crumbled

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away before our eyes. There must have been thousands of pounds' worth of machinery there—all perished. But why? We never knew. It was obvious there had been some dreadful sudden ending to the work; the tools lay just where they had been left at the moment. Even if the ore had suddenly failed, tools are valuable; they were lying about there for anybody to take who cared to have them, but the country people had left them severely alone. We wondered if some fell disease had suddenly attacked the peaceful little valley. There was nobody to tell us. Our local guide evidently did not like being near the place, but he either could not or would not explain why. As for our muleteer, he was both stupid and disagreeable, and neither knew nor cared, and said so. We went away with a curious feeling as if we had been present at a sermon without words, of which the text had been concerning the shortness of life and the vanity of riches.

Looking back over the past, I think Galicia was the most attractive part of Northern Spain—woods and sandy lanes, masses of gorse and broom ten to twelve feet high, which must be a gorgeous sight in spring, and plenty of heath not yet in bloom. We were, of course, riding due east, and soon found we were going against the lie of the country. This became more pronounced when we reached the Sierras, those curious barren mountains lying due north and south that divide Galicia from Asturias and cut one province so entirely off from the other that they might be different countries. Absolutely bare of trees, from 2000 to 3500 feet high according to our aneroid, these great rolling hills lie side by side, while their rounded contours are so regular that they might almost be the petrified



I WAS FILLING A KETTLE AT A FOUNTAIN.  
*[To face p. 88.*



FRED ON HIS PONY.



waves of some enormous ocean; between each pair flows a river into the Bay of Biscay. Going north and south there was often a good government road, but for us going due east there were only the partridge paths, as the natives call them, narrow tracks zigzagging up the 2000 feet and down again on the further side.

The view from the summit of the Sierras was superb. Far away to the north was the faint shimmer of the distant sea. To the south the great plains of Leon and Castile, stretching far away to Madrid, with their herds of cattle, the nursery of the famous bulls reared to supply the bull-rings. North and south there was nothing to stop the eye. The sea on one side and the plains on the other, both seemed equally vast and remote, fading away in the distance to become one with the sky.

Going over the Sierras was hard work for all of us. The blazing August sun and the steepness of the paths, and the luggage that was for ever getting out of place on the two loaded donkeys; and the way, when two of us went to put things right, the other donkeys invariably took the opportunity of fighting and rolling and otherwise misbehaving themselves kept us busy. Mother's donkey, known as the "Houri" from her gentle disposition, was amiable in every respect, but was perpetually being driven frantic by the horse-flies. No matter where she was, the "Houri," regardless of precipices or anything else, would contort her body in the most extraordinary manner in her wild endeavours to remove the flies. One day she did fall—luckily Mother was not on her—about thirty feet down the side of a mountain. She lay on a ledge, absolutely still, with her eyes shut, and Mother mourned for her as dead. It took us some time to scramble down to her. There seemed no doubt her back was broken,



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and Mother, with tears in her eyes, implored Fred to get out the revolver and give the "Houri" her *coup de grâce* before leaving her body to the ravens. Fred went about this sad task reluctantly, remembering only too well the one and only time he had ever fired off a revolver, and how the unexpected kick had injured his nose; in fact he had only just begun to rout about in one of the sacks for the revolver, when the "Houri," to our amazement, put out a long tongue, drew in a thistle that happened to be near her mouth and ate it with evident satisfaction. She had only had her wind knocked out of her, and a few minutes later was as well and lively as ever.

In the centre of the Sierras we came to Fonsagrada, a lonely little town with a high wall round it, perched in the midst of desolation. We had had a long day and the heat had been exhausting. Thankfully, after seeing the donkeys fed, we entered the only inn, and were shown into a dismal sitting-room adorned with a table and a few rocking-chairs, with three tiny bedrooms like cupboards opening out of it. We took possession of these and secured plenty of cold water, handing on the indiarubber bath from one to the other.

We were in the middle of our toilet when the sitting-room was invaded by our hotel-keeper, who rushed from one to the other of our keyholes telling us in the greatest excitement that the Alcalde, or Mayor, was coming to call on us. Mother and I wrestled with our clothes in the semi-darkness of the cupboards, while we implored Fred to be quick. On the heels of the hotel-keeper came the Alcalde and party, for we could hear the scraping of chairs and the heavy breathing of servants bringing in others; then the voice of the hotel-keeper, followed by dead silence, broken suddenly by Fred, who called from his cupboard that

he had lost the dictionary. "Never mind," said Mother, and, urged on by us, he confronted our visitors. There was more scraping of chairs, and a voice addressed Fred at length. I caught the words: "Periodico de Coruña—Peligroso—Valeroso—Intrépido." There was no doubt the lion story had reached Fonsagrada. At the same time Fred's voice at my door implored me to lend him the phrase-book and to hurry up.

It is not easy to do one's back hair in an almost completely dark cupboard, especially with someone hurrying one all the time, but at last Mother and I appeared on the scene and found the Alcalde seated in the centre of a circle of six young men. They were perched on the edges of six rocking-chairs, sucking the knobs of six gaudy walking-sticks, and they greeted us with bows almost down to the ground. There was then an interval while our visitors secured the rocking-chairs, which were behaving in a giddy manner in the background, and perched themselves again on the extreme edges of them. Then the Alcalde addressed us and we heard the whole of the lion story once more. This time we did not attempt to explain—we felt it would be absolutely useless—and contented ourselves with a few bows and murmurs to the effect that the killing of lions was nothing, oh—absolutely nothing.

It was then that I gave forth a most beautiful sentiment, a thing I had composed for just such an occasion during the day with the aid of the phrase-book; it embraced a flattering allusion to the scenery, and to the climate, as well as to the inhabitants of Northern Spain. It was well received by our audience, who repeated it to each other and bowed again, a matter of some difficulty, as anybody who has ever sat balanced on a rocking-chair on a slippery floor will readily understand.

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I then followed on with the name of each village we had passed through since Corunna, handing round our map at the same time. They looked at it upside down with great attention, and again there was a dreadful pause.

"I'd told them all that before you came," said Fred in an aside to me. "Can't you think of anything else?"

I next launched forth into an eulogistic dissertation on the Royal Family of Spain and England, during which Fred, who had found the dictionary, did wonders with it. I believe Fred and I gave our new friends to understand we were on intimate terms with all the crowned heads of Europe, in fact our conversation might have lasted quite five minutes longer, only mercifully it began to get dark and the Alcalde explained that it was dinner-time, and with many bows began to take his departure.

It was then that Fred suggested giving them another bonbon each. Mother looked puzzled, she knew of none. Fred produced a box of the pale pink tabloids, and explained that our visitors had already had a couple each all round. Mother and I nearly fainted with horror; they were the pills, strong and efficacious, specially camouflaged with rose water and supplied by our own doctor.

It really was a serious position. No doubt our guests would imagine they had been poisoned, and how could we explain, with our limited knowledge of their language and their total ignorance of ours? It was impossible. The more we thought it over the more anxious we felt. We were convinced that the only safety lay in flight.

We allowed ourselves a few hours' sleep, and long before dawn we packed our luggage, roused our sleepy

servant, saddled the donkeys, and determined that before the inhabitants of Fonsagrada had begun to awake, we should have put some miles of desolate hills between us and them.

It was lovely as we passed quietly through the town gate, though we felt like murderers. There were stars still shining faintly in the sky. Below us the mist lay like the softest grey cotton-wool. Out of it showed the rounded tops of the Sierras, looking like the backs of huge prehistoric monsters wallowing in a prehistoric sea. Directly the sun rose the mist began to rise and enveloped us in its folds. We rejoiced, having still that haunting fear regarding the poisoned potentates of Fonsagrada, but it made it very difficult to find our way, having left without a guide and being dependent on our not very accurate map and the compass. There was, of course, no road, only tracks made by sheep or cattle crossing and re-crossing in every direction.

As the day grew older I never remember being so hot before or since—no, not in tropical Africa—nowhere so absolutely roasted as we were as we toiled up those Sierras. Fred used to say that when he stopped for a minute and spread out his hands a stream would trickle down from each finger, but oh! the delight when at last we reached the top. The donkeys revelled in the short, sweet grass, while we threw ourselves down and gazed at the wonderful view, opened our arms to the fresh breeze and let it blow through our clothes till they felt like feathers, and it seemed as if we had only got to spring into the air to be gently wafted away till we touched the crest of the next Sierra, and then the next, till finally we reached the pale blue one farthest off of all, and after that must surely come the edge of the world, and we would be able to peep

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down into Australia or whatever country there is away on the other side at the back of beyond.

There were numbers of sheep feeding on the tops of the mountains, quite the most delightful little things in the way of sheep that I have ever seen ; they were all snow-white, and even the elderly ewes were not much bigger than a good-sized terrier, while the lambs were enchanting, exactly the size and shape of the ones we had when children, fixed on a green board with four little wheels. They were quite tame, much more so than the rough creatures in charge of them, and we longed to bring one home as a pet.

We crossed many beautiful rivers in the valleys between the ridges of the Sierras. One, at a village called Saleme, was particularly attractive. We were told that it was full of fish, and it certainly looked as if it ought to hold lots of salmon. It was an ideal river for fly-fishing, with large deep pools and rocks. We longed to try it, but we had no tackle with us, and if we had could not have spared the time. We consoled ourselves by thinking it must probably be horribly poached, for the people shot anything they could see, in and out of season, and we suspected would use dynamite or any other poaching dodge without a qualm of conscience.

## II

Shortly after this, we left Galicia and entered Asturias. We left the Sierras behind us, and our route became rather easier, but even then a local man was often at a loss, and never knew the way more than a few kilometres east or west of his own village. It was my job to engage a local guide overnight to show us the way in the morning. I used to mention the name of a village or little town marked on my map and some-

what in the direction in which we wished to go, then I asked the would-be guide if he had ever heard of it. He generally had heard of the place, but had never been there. Then I agreed with him to take us in the direction of the place I had named, and somehow or other we generally managed to get there; but we often had to change our guides two or three times in a day, and the constant explanations and payments were very tiresome. Of course the easy way would have been to keep to the main road that followed the coast-line all along the north, but that way Mother scorned; it was not her idea of seeing a country, and there was no doubt about it that our way was vastly more interesting, but also considerably harder work.

Our food was another difficulty. It was always the same story. We would turn up hungry and tired at a tiny village and ask for the *posada*. Had they any beds and corn for our donkeys? That being settled, we would inquire about food for ourselves. What had they for our dinner? We were always told we had but to command—all was there. Hopefully we would suggest meat. A look of astonishment would follow. Fish? A tin of sardines was sometimes available. Finally we would sit down to an omelette with bits of tough and rather nasty bacon embedded in it, a big brown loaf, and the wine of the country—rough fare if you like and poor. Fred often sighed for the flesh-pots of home, but it is no use bothering when there is nothing else to be had, and we were always too sleepy to be very particular.

We were rather disappointed at first with Asturias and much preferred Galicia. Gone were the bright-coloured costumes, gone were the laughing, merry people. In Asturias everybody wore black and seemed more solemn, not to say gloomy.

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The first little town we struck in Asturias was Cangas di Teneo, but it was a dull little place, and directly they discovered we were the heroes of the lion story we were followed about by most of the inhabitants, and were only too glad to get away.

Shortly after leaving Cangas di Teneo we crossed the first railway line we had seen since Lugo, and finding a village handy in which to leave the donkeys, we decided to go by rail to the coast to get more money and to change our muleteer, who was a disagreeable person. In the centre of the Sierras, thinking he was invaluable to us, he had struck for higher wages. Then and there Fred and I paid him off and told him he could go, but he was too frightened to leave us. We resolved, however, to get rid of him at the first opportunity. So, leaving the donkeys in the village, we took the man in the train with us to the coast to pay him off in the English Consul's office, give him his fare back to Corunna, and get another muleteer in his place.

The English Consul's office had a sort of family likeness with all the others I have seen. A few uncomfortable chairs, a table with an inkstand and a few pens much the worse for wear, a dreadful picture of Queen Victoria and several spittoons—that was all. However, after a minute or two a very capable-looking woman of about forty came in and explained to us that her father, the Consul, was unwell—too unwell, she was sorry to say, to be able to see us, but would be able to transact any business required if we would explain to her exactly what we wanted. This was easily done; our muleteer was paid off, the daughter taking the paper to her father in the next room for signature; we could hear his gruff voice in the distance. The man disposed of, we asked if the Consul

happened to know of a suitable person to take his place. Again the daughter disappeared, again we heard the gruff voice of the Consul, and the lady reappeared, saying her father knew of the very man to suit us, honest, respectable, good-tempered, absolutely the person we wanted, and not only that, but he was to be found exactly opposite, at a small *posada* where he had a temporary job, and the Consul's daughter offered to send for him to come to see us. However, as our time was short, we preferred to go ourselves; so, armed with his name written on a piece of paper, we thanked the lady and walked across in search of our new servant.

We found Alfonzo in an outhouse plucking chickens, his cheerful round red face beaming at us through a sort of snowstorm of feathers. In five minutes all was arranged. We suggested that he might like an hour or so in which to prepare for departure. "But no, illustrious ones, I have all. What more should I require?" and Alfonzo indicated his blue cotton blouse with one sweep of his hands, brushed a few feathers from his hair and, hat in hand, announced that he was ready to follow us to the death.

We then went to the Bank, and, after asking for the dollars to be tied up in rolls of twenty-five in strong paper, and saying we would call for them on our way to the station, we went off to lunch at the best hotel in the place. I am ashamed to think of the meal Fred and I had; I believe we had two helps of everything. One dish consisted of stewed cuttle-fish. Mother would not eat it, but I did. It didn't look attractive as a dish; the cuttle-fish were small, like white eggs with a sort of sea-anemone arrangement at one end, and were served stewed in their own "sepia" gravy, and tasted like a soft kid glove cooked in garlic. After



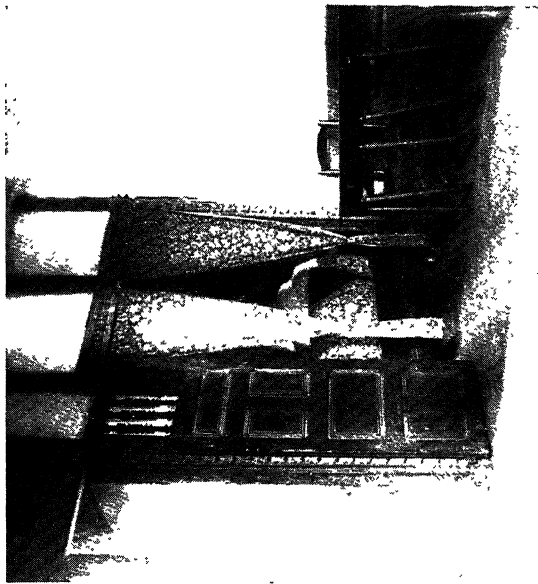
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this memorable meal we returned to the Bank and secured our dollars, and then called at the post-office for great rolls of the daily *Times* which always pursued Mother across Europe or wherever she happened to be.

Calling at that post-office was nearly our undoing, for, buying stamps, was one of the most lovely girls it has ever been my good fortune to see. Up to then we had only seen peasants; this was a lady. Not very tall, she was dressed in black, her feet were tiny and she wore very shiny little shoes. Her ankles, it must be confessed, were not quite so slender as they might have been, but for the rest she was perfect; and as for her eyes—as an American once expressed it, “My! you could splash in ’em.”

This divine creature introduced herself to us as having read all about us and the lions in the newspaper, and this time we were glad. In the most beautiful Spanish, with the lisp that is so attractive, at any rate when she was speaking, Fred and I listened once more to the old, old story. Mother was deep in a copy of *The Times* and dead to all else, while in the background, like a *Memento Mori*, lurked a fat oily person bulging out of a tight black dress—the duenna in charge of the lovely one. If Fred had been a year or two older we should never have got him out of that post-office; luckily I kept my head, and reminded him that Alfonzo was waiting for us at the station, and most reluctantly we tore ourselves away.

Alfonzo did not fail us—he never did, not once. He was on the platform, cap in hand, waiting for us, and cap in hand came up and began a speech. He said he had not realised when we had engaged him that we were the illustrious Lion-killers. We thrust a large and heavy parcel of *Times* newspapers into his arms, but that didn’t stop him. The train was late, of



A TYPICAL ROOM.

[To face p. 98.



ALFONZO.



course—they always are in Spain—so we couldn't dodge him by getting in. There we had to stand while Alfonzo, warming to the job, described, to the edification of the loungers and would-be passengers on the platform, how he, Alfonzo, at that very moment had in his pocket a copy of the *Periodico de Madrid* with a description of us in it, a copy he would have then and there produced had his hands not unfortunately been otherwise occupied. In that illuminating journal there were, so it seemed, besides other interesting details, particulars of the exact route we were going to take on our way to France. This was exceedingly interesting to us, who had only the vaguest idea ourselves of where we were going. Goodness knows what more Alfonzo would have said, but luckily the train appeared and he squeezed himself into a compartment that already seemed to be overflowing with passengers, and we saw no more of him till later, when we got back to the little village where we had left the donkeys.

To the north the province of Asturias is bounded by the Bay of Biscay, on the south by the Picos de Europa, a range of mountains utterly different from the rounded, turf-covered Sierras. The Picos de Europa are high bare rocks with patches of snow, in outline like a row of sharp teeth, and right in amongst the peaks is Cobadonga, famous in Spanish history, the stronghold that held out when the Moors conquered the rest of Spain. The little band of Christians that held it defied them to the end. Though out of our way, we determined to go to see this curious place, and found a little town amongst the rocks, the monastery and the houses seemingly all jumbled up together. There were very few pilgrims about when we were there, but at times there are thousands. Some of the

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pilgrims we saw at Cobadonga, as at other places in Galicia and Asturias, had their jackets and hats (they were men) thickly sewn with cockle-shells. I have a sort of recollection of having read that in mediæval times pilgrims wore cockle-shells, but I have no idea why. At any rate we were glad there were so few pilgrims at Cobadonga when we were there, for we were able to move about and see things comfortably.

Our new servant Alfonzo was a great success. He was such a good fellow, so willing and so amazingly like Sancho Panza. He was a great talker, and had no idea of hiding his own particular light under a bushel. He was dreadfully afraid the people belonging to the *posadas* where we stayed at night might think he was wasting his services on the desert air with mere ordinary persons in charge, so, in and out of season, he never failed to enlarge on our greatness, our bravery, and on the dangers we had overcome. He waved the *Periodico de Madrid* in their faces, so to speak. At first we tried to stop him, but gave it up; he looked so pathetically hurt if we said anything, almost tearful, that we in our turn found ourselves apologising for snubbing him, and let him afterwards say what he liked.

With the very slightest encouragement, in fact with no encouragement at all, he would begin a long harangue. Every evening, after our day's journey was over, he held a little court; we could always hear him, and often saw him surrounded by a crowd, very grave, almost solemn, standing cap in hand, his small but quick black eyes holding his audience, while he gave forth the lion story with variations all his own, followed later by adventures encountered en route with us. He was a born story-teller, a survival of a race that is now extinct, in England at any rate, killed by

the newspapers and cheap literature. If we had not been modest by nature we should have enjoyed listening to him. That the village people enjoyed hearing him there was no doubt whatever, and we were convinced that, as the manager of a travelling circus—the person who stands at the door by the ticket office and urges people to come in—he would have been worth his weight in gold.

At Cobadonga Alfonso gave such an account of us that the owner of the *posada* sent five miles into the mountains to tell the one and only Englishman to come at once and make our acquaintance. We were much interested when we heard of this, and very curious as to who this Englishman could be, but except that he lived high up near the snow and was sure to come, we could find out nothing. But we had not long to wait.

We had been looking at the church belonging to the monastery, and were in the courtyard attached to it, when a funny short figure dressed in black, accompanied by a number of dogs, came nimbly round a corner. The dogs were horrible mongrels, very thin, and every one showing signs of both ancient and recent battles, in the shape of scars, torn ears, etc. Before the party reached us there was a fight, the dogs barking and growling and rolling over and over in the hot dust, while the figure in black "laid into" them all round with a solid-looking stick. After a few minutes of appalling noise, comparative quiet ensued, and the figure, cap in hand, came up to Mother. He seemed to be between fifty and sixty, a weather-beaten person who might have been the chief engineer on a tramp steamer. He bowed to the ground, kissed Mother's hand, shook Fred's and mine, and then, with a beaming smile, announced in English that he was "d——d glad to see us, that he had been sixteen years in the

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— country, and it was the first — time he had set his d——d eyes on English ladies.”

The effect was electric; Fred and I were petrified, not at the language, for we were used to hearing the M.F.H. at home, who could “let out” pretty freely if anybody rode over his hounds. What we wondered was how Mother would take it. Mother, of all people! What would she do?

But she was quite equal to the occasion; she calmly put up her eyeglass and looked at the little man.

Not the least overcome, he went on using the most fearful language, and all the time expressing the most unmixed pleasure at meeting us. It was quite obvious he hadn’t the least idea what he was saying, but Fred and I went into ecstasies of delight, and we nearly suffocated in our efforts not to burst out laughing.

The dogs relieved the situation by having another fight. When Fred and Don Enrique—he told us that was what he was called—had restored some sort of order, he rushed off to get a friend to whom he said he had taught English.

“Good gracious!” said Mother, while Fred and I laughed till we cried.

Back came Don Enrique, much excited. With him was a young lay brother, evidently attached to the Monastery, very fat, with a round face like an elderly baby. When he laughed, which he did all the time, he shook like a jelly.

“Now then, you d——d old swine,” said Don Enrique, giving him a fearful bang on the back. “Show the ladies how well I have taught you the — lingo.”

With a beaming smile, the poor lay brother held out his hand. “I am d——d pleased to meet you,” he said.

"There," said Don Enrique, dancing with excitement, "didn't I tell you he spoke English like a d——d native?"

Just then the dogs broke out into fearful yells from inside a big door opening on to the courtyard. Fred and the lay brother rushed away together and disappeared.

"Only those d——d dogs," said Don Enrique, as we followed at a more sober pace.

It was so dark inside the big door that at first I could see nothing. Then I realised that it was a large sort of lumber-room. At the far end was a portable altar, a broken-down affair with some old and tattered draperies hanging down its sides. From one end stuck out Fred's boots, from the other the bare legs and sandals of the lay brother. The rest of them was hidden by the tattered draperies, which bulged and shook according to the ebb and flow of the battle that was going on underneath. Of course we had to join in. Don Enrique swore and danced about, hitting at anything he could see. Mother and I added to the general clamour by shouting directions to Fred, while the remainder of the dogs got in everybody's way and helped to raise clouds of dust. At last, filthy but triumphant, the lay brother and Fred emerged, each holding a choking dog by the hind leg.

After that we became great friends. Truly one can get used to anything. That at any rate applies to oaths. After a short time we hardly noticed Don Enrique's lurid language, and began to appreciate it as a picturesque embellishment to everyday conversation. In his way Don Enrique was an interesting man. He was working a manganese mine about five miles off, high up in the mountains, and insisted that we should go to see it. Mother was inclined to accept,



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for Don Enrique had promised that his people, who lived up there and worked in the mine, should have a *festa* in her honour, and sing her some of the wild native songs, while Fred and I wanted to go because of the joke and novelty of it all.

So we went the following day, and reached Don Enrique's hut in the evening. The mine was 5,500 feet above the sea, and was a primitive affair, the manganese being dug out in lumps and shipped direct to England. The mine just paid its way—that was all. Don Enrique, however, was very proud of it, and showed us everything there was to see, which didn't amount to much.

The view, however, was superb. Above us were wild rocks, bare and cruel-looking, ending in sharp "aiguillettes," stark against the sky, while big patches of shining white snow just above us showed where the stream came from that supplied the mine and the workers with water. Below lay the tiny town of Cobadonga in its cleft in the rocks, and further away again the flat plain and the sea. The sun was setting and it was glorious, but we were fearfully hungry and frozen by the cold, and were glad when Don Enrique, suggesting tea, led the way into his cabin. Poor Don Enrique! He had evidently been making frantic efforts to tidy up the place in our honour.

The hut was divided up into two parts. The part we were in consisted of a stone floor and whitewashed walls, on one side of which were two ledges, like berths in a ship, neatly arranged with sheets and blankets, and which Mother and I rightly took to be our beds for the night. In a corner on the floor, with a rough sort of chimney to carry off the smoke, was a splendid big fire, while a nice-looking Spanish woman was balancing a kettle on the top of the logs, evidently a

preliminary to making coffee. Don Enrique, who had never got over the excitement of our advent, bustled about.

"Now, young sir," he said to Fred, "you just take care of that d——d kettle, while she," and he indicated the woman with his thumb, "helps me to lay the table. And be careful with those hot ashes; don't you go knocking them about on the —— floor."

I was making toast, while Mother, not finding a chair handy, had pushed up a small barrel that was against the wall and, sitting on it, was warming her hands at the fire and talking to Don Enrique, who was opening tins of jam and sardines, and pulling corks out of bottles in a most attractive manner. Whether it was interest in something Mother and Don Enrique were saying, or whether coming into the warm hut out of the intense cold outside had made Fred sleepy, at any rate he forgot the kettle and down it fell, spoiling my toast and casting a shower of sparks in all directions. Don Enrique darted forward and helped to stamp them out.

"Now then, young sir," he shouted, "didn't I tell you to be careful of those d——d sparks? Don't you know that your Mother is sitting on a keg of gun-powder?"

That tea or supper or whatever it was lasted the whole evening. We had hardly got half through it when the headman came in to say they were ready to begin dancing, so out we went to watch. There was a small flat space about the size of a lawn-tennis court just below the hut where we were. The moon and a few paraffin lamps did the lighting, while Don Enrique dispensed the refreshments, which mostly consisted of hot rum and water with lots of spice and sugar. Fred and I thought the mixture delicious, and as it was

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bitterly cold, Mother, afraid of our getting chills, allowed us to have as much as we liked, while poor Don Enrique, enchanted with the success of the entertainment, rushed about and was kindness itself. Really it was a very wonderful evening. The beauty of the moonlight, the wild music, and the women singing a sort of droning nasal accompaniment to a couple of drums while they danced the fandango—young as I was I felt the charm of it all. I also remember only too well what an awful night I spent when I went to bed. Mother had the lower berth and I crawled up on to the shelf above her. I don't believe it had ever been meant to be slept on, but as Fred had the dinner-table, which had been taken out for him into the other room, there was nowhere else for me to go. It wasn't the rickety plank I objected to, but the multitudes of fleas. For sixteen years, I suppose, they had feasted on Don Enrique and had got a bit tired of him—at any rate, they appreciated me! We had only brought just our things for one night and had no Keating's, so I was helpless. All night I tossed about, while Mother strongly objected to my agonised wriggles, expecting every moment that my crazy shelf would give way and I come down on the top of her. The next morning my arms looked as if I had been stricken with smallpox. The nice Spanish woman was full of sympathy. She condoled with me in a mixture of English and Spanish. "Mucho flío, Señorita," she said.

Fred had spent a comfortable night on the kitchen table and Mother had hardly got a bite on her, but then she never did get bitten! I remember in one little Spanish *posada* she happened to move her pillow in the morning, and under it was a family of bugs, big and little, but they had never touched her during the night; if she had not happened to see them she would not have even suspected their presence.

We had gone to bed at ten and were up at 4.30; at five we were taken a walk by Don Enrique to see the lake. It was almost circular and about three-quarters of a mile in diameter. We saw large trout, at a guess about three pounds' weight or more, floating about in it. There was no boat, but even from the rocks one could have had a fine day's sport, and we wished we had a rod with us. While we were looking at the lake, six great birds soared close to us, and we could see their white, or rather grey, heads and necks quite easily; we thought they must be griffon vultures. We also saw a number of birds about the size of pigeons, with grey breasts and a strangely defined bar across the tail. We returned for breakfast at eight, and afterwards, escorted by Don Enrique, rode back to Cobadonga.

Quite accidentally, when talking to Don Enrique, we happened to mention having called on the English Consul at the Port, and that we had not seen him because he was ill.

"He's always like that," said Don Enrique.

"Will he never get better?" we asked.

"No," said Don Enrique, "never so long as the British Government continue to pay his salary."

"Is he always in bed?" we asked.

"I wouldn't like to say where he is," replied Don Enrique. "You see, he is dead; he was ill for some time before he died, and his daughter did his work for him, and did it well too, so when he *did* die, she thought she might just as well let the Government find it out for themselves; it was no business of hers to tell them, so she just carried on and she's carrying on still."

"But we heard the Consul's gruff voice," we said, "speaking from the other room."

"She does that," said Don Enrique, "to keep up

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the illusion, you see." And, interlarded with the strongest language, Don Enrique gave it as his opinion that she was a d——d clever woman, and so long as she did the d——d work well, what did it matter whether she wore petticoats or trousers? In which we all agreed with him thoroughly.

We were quite sorry to say good-bye to Don Enrique and his friend the lay brother. Don Enrique and his dogs accompanied us part of our way after leaving Cobadonga, and the last we saw of him was a little figure dancing about, hitting now here, now there at all and sundry of his dogs, who were enjoying one of their periodical fights.

What a lonely life his was, and how I wonder what became of him in his old age!

### III

Personally I was disappointed in the flowers—we saw so few, and I had always heard they were so beautiful in the North of Spain, but we were there doubtless at the wrong time of year for seeing them. All the bulbs had been over for months, and even the tops had died down and gone. I saw the old and empty seed-pods of wild pinks and many other flowers which I should like to have seen in bloom. Even the flowering shrubs were over, and there were no alpenines in bloom even high up near Don Enrique's hut, but he told me there were quantities of flowers in spring. The cork trees in Galicia were always picturesque and the chestnuts everywhere were splendid, as fine as oaks in England and as large.

Wherever there were chestnut-trees there were pigs, sometimes tolerably well bred, but as a rule they were nearly related to wild ones, long of snout and covered

with coarse grey bristles, and always miserably thin. For about nine or ten months in the year they eke out a melancholy existence; then when the chestnuts are ripe they have a short but glorious time before becoming the nasty tough bacon we so disliked. We saw them just at their thinnest time in August and September, and they were so starved that I believe a small child alone would have been in danger of being eaten by them.

Notwithstanding the absence of flowers, the butterflies were wonderful. Curiously enough, we would ride for days and hardly see one, and yet twice especially, once in Galicia and once in Asturias, we came across them I should say in thousands. The two places where we found them in such numbers were in no way remarkable, so far as we could see—little valleys much like many others we had seen—nor were there any conspicuous flowers to attract them. In Galicia we saw quantities of black ones with white frilled edges to their wings; deep red with black edges, and many others. In Asturias they were even more lovely, and in my diary I see mentioned tan-coloured ones with black veining and green bodies; orange bodies with wings pink underneath and black spots, olive-green upper wings with white stripes; saffron-yellow ones which never seemed to rest; and dark grey ones with black eye-shaped spots on their wings. Of course, we did not catch them, and have even kept the names of the places where we saw them a secret.

We saw few monasteries in Galicia, but a large number in Asturias. They seemed to be rich in inverse ratio to the population round them. One day we came upon a convent surrounded by a wall quite eighteen feet high with only one small door in it. Being ladies, we thought we might be admitted, so rang the bell.

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The little door opened and we found ourselves in a small bare room, out of which opened a door into the Chapel. In a corner was a revolving shelf, so constructed that though it could be turned, nothing could be seen. From behind came a voice, and we had a little conversation. The speaker told us hers was one of the strictest orders in Spain; she told us the Father Confessor was the only person allowed to enter except the Queen and the Infantas; that once a nun had been admitted, she never passed the walls again; she would stay there till she died, and then would be buried under the flagstones in the Chapel. Even when buried in the Chapel she was not allowed to remain there. After a certain time her bones were moved to make room for others. We were allowed to go into the Chapel, and saw the tiny oil-lamps burning on the stone floor, each marking the spot where a nun had recently been buried; later only a cross cut in the stone would mark an unknown grave. From the Chapel we passed once more through the little bare room. There on the revolving shelf was a packet of sugary biscuits, a little gift from within that living tomb.

We saw another sad sight in priest-ridden Asturias. One day whilst wandering slowly along a lane we were caught up and passed by a two-wheeled cart in which two monks were seated, driving a pony at a quick trot. When they had gone by we saw, running behind, a young monk fastened to the back of the cart by cords round his wrists. It must have been more than half an hour later when the same cart met us on its return journey, still going at a quick trot. As we drew aside to let it pass we looked again at the young monk. This time his head was thrown back, his face was dead white, there were red marks on his arms where the cords had cut his wrists, he could hardly move his bare feet, and

at every step they left bloody tracks on the dusty road. We watched the cart out of sight and went on our way, wondering greatly what was the story of a crime that required so fearful a penance.

One drawback to travelling in Spain is the horse-flies. My first introduction to them was at Corunna. I had just got into bed and was falling off to sleep, when I felt something running with the speed of a race-horse up and down my unfortunate body. I flew out of bed and, after an exciting chase, secured a black object about the size of a small boot-button, surrounded by a fringe of legs something like a tiny crab. These horrible creatures belong, I believe, to the tick family; they do not prey on human beings, but animals are driven nearly crazy by them. These ticks are tough to a degree; it required the heel of a shoe used as a hammer to bring about the slaughter of one of them, and they seemed to be there in millions. So far as we could make out, there was no way of keeping animals free from them, though, of course, at that time in Spain arsenical cattle-dip was a thing unknown, and indeed not very common elsewhere.

Alfonzo couldn't understand our love for climbing up and down rough little paths. His idea of bliss was a large white road with no hills, frequented by the rank and fashion of Spain, and, if possible, leading to a large modern hotel. During our midday halts he would tell us of the wonderful roads he had seen; he described the magnificent clouds of dust that marked the route of the local diligence, of the Señoras and Señoritas who climbed into the diligence with black hair and got out of it as white as the donkey we had named the "Bishop."

It took Alfonzo four or five days to find out that the one and only thing that did attract us was a hot bath.



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We had only a collapsible rubber bath with us, which held about three inches of cold water, into which one lowered oneself carefully, for if one touched the edges the whole thing immediately emptied itself on to the floor and poured through the cracks on to the backs of the cattle in the stable below, who, of course, were terrified. So Alfonzo knew he held a trump card when one day he told us of a wonderful hot spring of which our local guide had been extolling the merits. It was, he said, the one place in Spain to which we must go, which on no account must we miss. It was his late Majesty—so Alfonzo told us—who derived such benefit from the waters in this favoured part that he had caused a magnificent hotel to be built, so that others might come and bathe and benefit also by the waters. We were much attracted by the thought of a good wash in hot water, but when we came upon the place quite suddenly round the angle of a mountain our hearts failed us completely. It was a large modern hydropathic establishment full of visitors. At once we became miserably conscious of the state of our clothes, torn as they were by brambles and rocks. We meditated instant flight, but it was too late; we had been seen by several people on the steps of the hotel, and already two porters in caps came running to meet us.

Alfonzo was enchanted. "This is right. This is as it should be; they have read the *Periodico de Madrid*, they know who we are and they appreciate the honour," he said. He received the two porters in a haughty manner, and allowed them to take the donkeys round to the stables at the back while, cap in hand, he took us to the main entrance, and whether we liked it or not introduced us formally to the people standing on the steps.

It was dreadful. Only too horribly aware of our

tattered appearance, we had to stand there while Alfonzo went through the whole thing—the lions in Africa and all. The manners of the hearers were perfect, they did not smile, but listened gravely, and gave us to understand that they had heard all about it before and were even expecting our arrival.

A big man in black with a white tie ushered us into the usual hotel entrance-hall, gorgeous with mirrors that reflected our ragged selves from all sides and made us more miserable than ever. With much state we were shown upstairs into three very expensive rooms, resplendent with gold and crimson velvet, each with a stuffy-looking bed in an alcove, protected from every breath of fresh air by heavy crimson velvet curtains to match. Our bits of travel-worn luggage looked strangely lonely in the middle of all this splendour, as out of place as we looked ourselves, while the man in the white tie announced to us that these very rooms were the ones inhabited by the late lamented King, and Mother speculated in English as to what the bill would be.

“Tell him we want three hot baths at once,” said Mother. She had been looking round in vain; there were no visible signs of any sort of washing-apparatus in either of the rooms—not even a dressing-table.

The manager was not to be interrupted like that; he waited, with the perfect manners of his people, until Mother had finished, and then began all over again.

This time he was interrupted by an extraordinary little person dressed in a cheap-looking suit of white boating flannels, with tiny little feet in tiny little dancing pumps, whose black hair stood straight up on his head like a bottle-brush. Goodness knows what he was, we thought probably South American.

The little man advanced with a series of bows; he

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had the manners of a dancing-master. "I introduce myself," he said, "I spik Englis. I Englis all over," and he patted the white flannel suit. Then he shook hands all round, again announced he was "Englis," that he had once been to "'ull," and that he had read all about us and the lions; in fact, on the strength of having once been to Hull and wearing an English suit, he adopted us, ordered everybody else about, ran about himself, dragged our luggage out of the porter's hands, and put it into all the wrong rooms. Most kind, poor little man, but an intolerable bore.

He couldn't understand our longing for hot baths. "You do not eat, you do not sleep, you vash!—Vonderful! Vonderful!" He even insisted on coming with us to the baths, which were downstairs, and ran from one bathroom to the other, turning on the taps and upsetting the towels. Even when we managed to barricade him out he didn't leave, but ran from one door to the other yelling through the key-holes, while Mother shouted bitter complaints through the partition between her bath and mine, saying she had been obliged to plug her keyhole with her pocket handkerchief to prevent his looking through it, and that now she wanted to blow her nose!

What with our baths and our efforts to dress as smartly as our very modest luggage would allow us, we were a little late for dinner. All the visitors got up and bowed when we came in, and we bowed in return, and were placed in lonely glory in the centre of the room, where, as Fred remarked, they could not help seeing exactly how much we ate. He also remarked that so far as he could see there was one, and only one, advantage in temporary fame, and that was that one was served first and had time for another help before the less favoured ones had finished.

At the end of dinner, just when we felt we could enter pleasantly into the feelings of a boa-constrictor, or what we imagined were the feelings of a boa-constrictor after a good dinner, the hotel-manager announced that a dance had been arranged in our honour. This was a bomb-shell. What with the hot bath and the dinner, already we were in a condition in which we could hardly keep awake. We were taken into a large ballroom and were planted down in the centre of a wide seat that skirted one side of the room. A large lady in black velvet sat next to Mother, and an equally large lady, also in black, sat next to me. The other ladies sat near, while poor Fred disappeared behind a group of young men who were standing about, busily putting on white gloves. The ladies seated near Mother and me at once began a spirited conversation, of which, of course, Mother did not understand one word; upon which her neighbour gave her up and, planting an elbow in the centre of Mother's vitals, leaned heavily over her as if she were a cushion and joined in with what the other lady and I were saying. Mother didn't seem to mind, in fact a few minutes later she was fast asleep and remained so. Languages were never Mother's strong point.

Then the band struck up, and several young men asked me to dance. I asked to be excused, explaining that I was tired.

"You are right, Señorita," said the large lady next to me. "They are not worth dancing with—all those," and she indicated the young men with a wave of her small white hand—tiny hands, seeing how large the rest of her was—and she proceeded to tell me about her family and that of the lady next to Mother, who, it seemed, was nearly related to the King of Spain. I heard the whole thing, but was not much the wiser, for

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having only "come out" that spring, my acquaintance with the Spanish aristocracy was strictly limited—limited indeed to one or two junior Attachés whom I had danced with during the season.

I think I must have been almost asleep when a violent poke of the elbow from my neighbour made me sit up straight. "Marqués," she said in high excitement, "Marqués de T—," and she bowed and smiled at a tall dark man, good-looking, with a masterful eye, who walked up to us, bowed right and left, and asked me to dance. I refused, of course, and very politely explained that I was tired, too tired to dance.

¶ The large lady on my right was shocked, horrified; she poked me again and again, and in a most audible voice, under the Marqués's nose, so to speak, she rattled off his titles, of which he appeared to have dozens. The other large lady joined in and, leaning heavily across Mother, gave me still more good advice. They evidently thought I was a fool, but I held out stoutly, on which the Marqués turned to the company at large.

"The Señorita is tired, she will not dance," he said. "I will sing to her," and sing he did—song after song. He sang well and he knew it. Then he ordered champagne, but I explained we never touched it. He smote his forehead. "English," he said, "I had forgotten. Beer," he ordered, "bring beer, glasses of beer, bottles of beer, beer with sugar in it." The waiters looked wildly round; of course there was no English beer to be had. Again I explained that we did not drink beer.

But we got on like a house on fire. Mother was still asleep when the Marqués settled that we were to go with him the following day to stay at his palace at T—. He would drive us there himself. He gave orders

right and left; goodness knows what he had arranged by the time Mother awoke.

“What is that man saying?” she asked.

I had to explain.

“Where is Fred?” she said very sharply. Fred was found, curled up fast asleep at the far end of the room. We said good-night all round, the Marqués kissing our hands and telling us to leave everything to him, and that he was going to see to all the arrangements himself.

Mother marched us up to our rooms. She sat down on one of the large crimson velvet chairs and gave me a scolding I remember even now. The “glad eye” had not been invented then, at least not under that name, but I was accused of something very like it. I did not dare to say anything, but felt hurt and indignant, conscious as I was of the devastation I might have caused in our family circle had I not behaved like a perfect model of discretion.

At daybreak Mother had us out of bed and miles away before the visitors in the hotel had awakened from their beauty sleep, but all that day poor Fred lamented over the flesh-pots we had left, and grievous were his sighs as we sat down once more to the omelettes and the sardines we knew so well and disliked so much.

One day we were riding through a little valley beside a pretty stream whose banks were covered with maiden-hair fern, when we came to a tiny village. Leaning out of the upper window of one of the houses was an Englishman with red hair; he was so unmistakable that we called out to him in English, thinking he would, of course, be glad to see us. Instead, a look of terror came over his face; he fled out at the back of the house and we saw him running into the woods at full speed. Wondering what had happened, we stopped

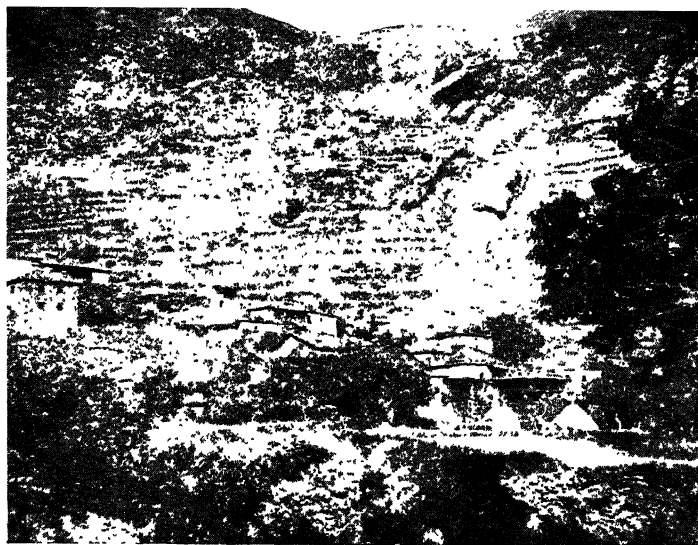
## *Excursions and Some Adventures*

and asked about him. The people told us we were right, he was an Englishman. But why so terrified at the sight of us? We heard the reason later on when lunching at San Sebastian with our Ambassador. The man, he said, was a well-known murderer, wanted by the police, who had hidden from justice in this remote part of Spain.

On the whole I think the buildings in the north-west of Spain were disappointing. We came across curious towers, one at Villalba in Galicia looked as if it dated from the time of the Moorish occupation. In Asturias there were many interesting churches, where they were poor enough to have escaped the devastating hand of the restorer. In places like Cobadonga, where the pilgrims had brought money to the Church, the result was deplorable. As we got nearer France the churches and houses became more interesting. In my Mother's diary, speaking of Valmaseda, she calls it a "wonderfully picturesque town on a river, most quaint balconied houses almost in the water and at right angles with a high-pitched single-arch bridge, with watch-tower in centre, covered with quaintest pictures of ships and battles."

Again, speaking of a place called Beazain in the Basque provinces, she says: "Splendid church, arch of door entirely decorated with bas-relief figures of cherubim, life-size. Inside very fine. Floor covered with graves, tapers burning on each produced curious effect." In the Basque provinces we also saw old black-and-white houses that might have been in Cheshire. At Elizondo, near the French frontier, Mother speaks of the houses being decorated with curious coats of arms.

Of course, this was thirty years ago. By now they may all, alas! have been "improved" away.



TYPICAL COUNTRY AND VILLAGE, ASTURIAS.



BLACK AND WHITE HOUSES, BASQUE PROVINCES.

*[To face p. 118.]*





Only once did we get hopelessly lost during that trip in Spain. It was on the border between the province of Santander and the Basque provinces. I don't know how it happened. It was my job to engage the guides—such as they were—and to settle where to spend the night. It is not easy to calculate distances when you know little of the language and nothing of the country. Up to then we had been most fortunate, but this time I was “down and out,” and so was our so-called guide, who, after leading us up and down some very wild country, announced that he had no idea where we were. We passed no houses, nor was there a sign of anybody from whom we could ask the way.

It is generally the wisest thing when lost to go downhill, and follow a stream if you can—it usually leads to houses. This we did so long as the light lasted, but there was no moon and we were really uneasy when it became dark. We had no desire to spend the night supperless out in the open; and the poor donkeys wanted feeding as well. There was, of course, no road—we were only following, or trying to follow, a sort of track probably made by sheep or goats going up on to the hills to feed. In the darkness we all had awful falls and, as we were near a stream, got soaking wet as well.

Luckily, just as we were beginning to despair, Alfonzo, who had eyes like a hawk, declared that he could see a light. Much cheered, we made for it, and before long realised there was some sort of cultivation on either side of us; then we got on to a rough road and, still following the light, arrived at a big door in a high wall, the light still streaming out of a window far up above us. We lit a match; at the side of the big door, which was studded with large nails, hung an iron chain, doubtless a bell rope. We gave it a pull

## *Excursions and Some Adventures*

and waited to see what would happen. It was as if a hive of bees had been stirred up inside, such a lot of running about and talking there was, and finally a little shutter about six inches square in the big door was pushed aside and two eyes appeared, and we were asked what we wanted.

This was a supreme moment for Alfonzo. He stepped forward and rose to the occasion like a hero. In his blue smock, hat in hand, he stood there and told once more the story that had originated in Corunna and had accompanied us ever since. It was now to prove our salvation. We stood there striking matches while Alfonzo excelled himself; he was quite splendid. No longer did we feel ourselves blushing at the things he said; on the contrary, we called down blessings on his head as we watched hopefully the bright black eyes at the other side of the little door. Alfonzo's success was never in doubt. There was the sound of bars being slipped, locks being turned; slowly the great door opened and we were invited to enter. We were received by a little lady in black, and a younger one, evidently her daughter; with them was the chaplain, a thin foxy person with a sharp red nose and a dirty *soutane*, and in the background a number of servants.

As we entered a courtyard the big doors were carefully locked and barred behind us. Alfonzo and the donkeys disappeared into the stables at one side of the yard, while we were conducted by the lady and her daughter and the chaplain up some stone steps to the first floor, and were ushered into a long bare room with no carpet and lit by two or three blazing paraffin lamps destitute of any kind of shades.

Either the master of the house was away or was dead; at any rate, we never saw him. It was the lady whose shrewd black eyes had surveyed us through the little

opening in the big door. She now took control, and indeed was kindness itself.

At first we were so blinded by the bright light that we could see nothing, but really there was nothing in that room to see. Furniture there was none, except a table in the centre, six rocking-chairs and a broken-down sort of hurdy-gurdy propped up against the wall.

While the ladies bustled about getting food for us, we were entertained by the chaplain. As I have said before, Mother never attempted to learn Spanish, so Fred and I prepared to do what we could in the conversation line with his Reverence. But he—good man—had his own ideas on the subject: he would have nothing to do with the certainly young, and presumably ignorant; he waved us aside with a dirty hand, snubbed our efforts and concentrated his attention on Mother. Fred and I did not mind, our thoughts were directed on supper, and we were wondering what the efforts of the ladies would provide.

The chaplain addressed a long sentence to Mother. "Ya, ya," she said, not understanding a word, and speaking Norwegian, as she always did on such occasions. The chaplain tried again, the substance of his remarks being how he looked forward to the time when all the heretics in England would be burnt at the stake.

Fred and I, still feeling snubbed, said nothing. Mother, balanced on the edge of her rocking-chair and anxious to be pleasant, had a brilliant inspiration—she would try Latin. "*Sic transit gloria mundi*," she said, indicating a large hole in her skirt.

The chaplain bowed and said something.

"Requiescant in pace," continued Mother, much encouraged, remembering the headings of the Psalms

## *Excursions and Some Adventures*

and the few quotations she knew. "Resurgam. Exultemus."

It was too much for the chaplain. "Ingleses," he cried, and going to the hurdy-gurdy he seized the handle and played "Yankee Doodle" as hard as he could.

At last the much-looked-forward-to meal appeared. The kind lady of the house came in, followed by her servants, who placed three large covered dishes on the table. Trying not to look too greedy, Fred and I drew up our rocking-chairs. With great state the lids were lifted off the dishes. One held several cups of the thick cold-water chocolate of the country, the next some sugar biscuits to eat with it, and the third dish a tinned pineapple; that was all. Not an egg—nothing. Never shall I forget the disappointment of that moment. What a meal at 10 p.m. for three hungry people who had been lost for hours and had had nothing to eat since luncheon at midday!

Of course we paid for our food and lodging when we left the next morning, a performance in which the chaplain took great interest. What struck us was the length of the lady's finger-nails. We supposed, as with the Chinese, the idea was to indicate a person of leisure who did not require to work for a living. The nails projected nearly an inch beyond her fingers, and to pick up the big Maria Teresa dollars we had laid on the table she had to push them to the edge and let them fall into her hand.

Alfonzo seemed to have had a better time than we had. In fact he had enjoyed himself very much, so much, indeed, that whenever he saw a prosperous-looking house thereafter he suggested that we should ask for shelter and try our luck once more; but Fred and I, remembering the tinned pineapple and the horrible sweet biscuits, were firm in our refusal.

One day he assured us there was a family of "very distinction" living close to where we were. He was full of the grandeur of the house and the wonders inside it, gathered in conversation from our local guide.

Leaving the donkeys with Mother and Alfonzo, Fred and I went forth to have a look. We came across a wall with an iron gate in it, and creeping forward very carefully we peeped through, and saw a big untidy garden with a broad gravel path. On the path, ranged in a semicircle with their backs to the sun, were five or six wicker chairs, the old-fashioned kind with hoods over the top. From these projected a variety of legs, mostly fat white ones ending in small shiny black shoes, while in the centre, handy for the whole party, was a small iron three-legged table, and upon it—the sole and only thing to be seen—was a china ornament like a porcupine, bristling with dozens of toothpicks. The illustrious family were taking the air in the garden, and notwithstanding Alfonzo's bitter disappointment, we decided that we would not disturb them that day.

#### IV

When we got to the Basque provinces our road seemed to be no easier. Mother speaks in her diary of leaving Beasain at 6.15 a.m., scrambling up 3000 feet and then down as much the other side before reaching Betelu for the night, after walking quite sixteen miles.

Along the north of Spain there was for us no alternative between the dusty high-road along the coast and the wild little paths over the mountains. The other main roads all ran north and south, and during the whole of our journey we only three times crossed a railway line.

## *Excursions and Some Adventures*

The Basque provinces have been often described, and the curious customs of the Basque people. At Elizondo the floor of the church was covered with strips of carpet for the people to kneel on. Each family had a basket with a cushion in it, a white cloth on the cushion and a thick roll of taper five inches in diameter and fifteen inches long, the whole protected on three sides by a screen about eighteen inches high, and painted in odd patterns. We asked ourselves what the reason for the screen could be, and wondered if the idea was to keep the contents of the basket from malign influences. As the screen was only on three sides, and the open space always faced the altar, it struck us as being perhaps the explanation. Between the services, when the churches were empty, it was curious to see the floors dotted with baskets and screens.

Between Santander and the Basque provinces we came across two young Spaniards on a shooting expedition. Don Juan and his brother, who spoke excellent French, had heard about our trip and were most kind. They told us there were plenty of bear, wild boar, roe-deer and badgers in the mountains, and that they had had excellent sport. When we appeared they gave up their "shoot" and joined us.

The first day all was *couleur de rose*, Mother was delighted, both the young men were exceedingly good-looking and made themselves most useful. The second day she began to be suspicious, and when Don Juan suggested that he and his brother should come with us for the rest of our journey, her French was fluent and to the point. It was dreadful. Don Juan was a typical Spaniard, serious and desperately in earnest. "On ne badine pas avec l'amour," certainly not in Spain. We bid a tragic farewell to the two brothers on

a lonely mountain-top, Don Juan vowing he would come to England ; but Mother effectually stopped that too. The dramatic episode was ended. I never saw Don Juan again.

A couple of days later we were joined by another man, this time a beggar. He was a strapping tall fellow, thin, and about fifty years old. For hours he strode along talking to us, mostly about smuggling, for we were nearing the Pyrenees, and our new friend evidently knew all about it. He talked to us in a normal voice like any other peasant, but directly he saw a house, off came his hat and, speaking with the whining voice of a professional mendicant, he invoked all the Saints and asked for alms or at least food. I don't know about the money, but he generally managed to get some food. He had a leather bottle slung on his back into which he poured any wine that he was given. You had to blow down the neck of it before you could drink any of the contents, but all the same the beggar most politely invited us to have some before drinking himself. Once he was given a maize cake ; this he offered to me, but when I refused it he tasted it himself. " You are right, Señorita," he said, " I also will not eat it," and he offered it to my donkey. He was a lordly beggar. When we arrived at a place called Ecurra he was there to receive us and again offered us a drink.

At Ecurra the *posada* was, as usual, a wild queer place ; the entrance to the stables was far below the house, but there was also another entrance on the level of the kitchen floor. This was because of the snow, which, we were told, is sometimes ten feet deep in winter. The one reception-room in the *posada* was long and dark, with one tiny window with shutters and no glass, the only furniture a huge oak table and a



## *Excursions and Some Adventures*

couple of benches. Our bedrooms on the floor above were much the same. No glass in the windows, and no furniture except beds and a couple of chairs. The kitchen was quite clean, but the only fire was on the floor in the centre of the room, with no chimney whatever that we could see; nevertheless in Mother's diary she remarks that we had an excellent dinner, and that it consisted of fried eels, stewed chicken and the rough wine of the country.

In wild countries it is always well to be careful in the neighbourhoods of ports or near frontiers, especially frontiers, always a happy hunting-ground for shady people, who have a pleasing habit of skipping over to the other when either side becomes too hot for them. These persons are banditti, or smugglers, or both one day, and the next, when the police come to look for them, are peaceful villagers digging in their gardens!

We didn't much care for the look of the people at Escurra, and when we asked for a guide to show us the way in the morning, a nasty-looking man was produced, and we were told there was no one else available. I think we were all a little uneasy when we got up the following morning at 5 a.m., and at six were well en route. Our evil-looking guide led the way, twisting about in and out of the foothills of the Pyrenees, and what made us still more uneasy was the fact that our revolver was *hors de combat*. One of our luggage donkeys when enjoying a roll had burst our bag of arrowroot, and the revolver was choked with it. It would have taken an hour or two to clean it and we couldn't spare the time.

For a couple of hours we rode along, never seeing a soul. On either side of us were the mountains, absolutely deserted as it seemed. We saw no houses, not even a shepherd or a sheep, no sign of life but a few

eagles far overhead. There were no trees, but high thick scrub, higher than our heads even when on our donkeys. We rode in single file, for there was no room to ride two abreast; the guide first on foot, I following him on my donkey, then Mother on hers, followed by Fred on a pony we had bought some time before. Then came the two luggage donkeys, and Alfonzo on the "Bishop" brought up the rear. I was not feeling very happy, having a horrid suspicion that the guide was not taking us the direct route to the next village. Quite suddenly he stopped and gave a loud hyena-like yell. I was really alarmed when I heard two yells in reply from somewhere ahead of us. What were other people doing in this lonely spot, and how did our guide know they were there? Before I had time to say anything the guide turned to me. He bowed low. Even when they mean to murder you the Spanish are polite.

"Señorita," he said, "are you well armed? This is a bad part, there are many *male gente* about here. See!" He opened his coat and I saw he had a couple of revolvers and a knife.

I realised in a flash that our guide was leading us into an ambush, but also that he was uncertain how well armed we might be. Luckily I kept my head. Without showing the terror I felt I bowed in return. "Certainly," I said in my best Spanish. "Surely it is well known there are *male gente* here. Should we have come had we not been prepared for anything? Let us proceed!" and I waved my hand.

The guide looked at me; we stared at each other for one moment. The guide bowed again. "Si, Señorita," he said.

I knew I had won, but only because of the lion story; it was our reputation that had saved us.

## BOSNIA, HERZEGOVINA, AND MONTENEGRO

### I

1899

OUR next trip was to Bosnia, Herzegovina and Montenegro. This time Mother was by way of taking her three daughters to Venice, myself, and my sisters, Engla and Kathleen, both younger than I was. We were supposed to be going to study Venetian art—at least Father imagined so—and were alone; for our Mother considered it good for us to learn to look after ourselves and do our own packing. It was August and Venice ought to have been delightful; as it turned out it was a sad disappointment. A gale of wind and rain was blowing in from the sea, making little waves on the Grand Canal and stirring up all the smells. The inhabitants seemed to have retired to bed till the weather improved, for there was hardly anybody moving about; even the pigeons in the Piazza San Marco had both their feathers and their tempers ruffled by the wind.

The mosquitoes alone were enjoying life and feeling really energetic. Our hotel was full of them, apparently the largest and most voracious of their kind. Mother was not bothered by them, but they nearly drove her daughters wild. We spent our time in the hotel hunting over our mosquito-nets and burning pastilles, supposed to be death to all insects. Not-

## *Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Montenegro*

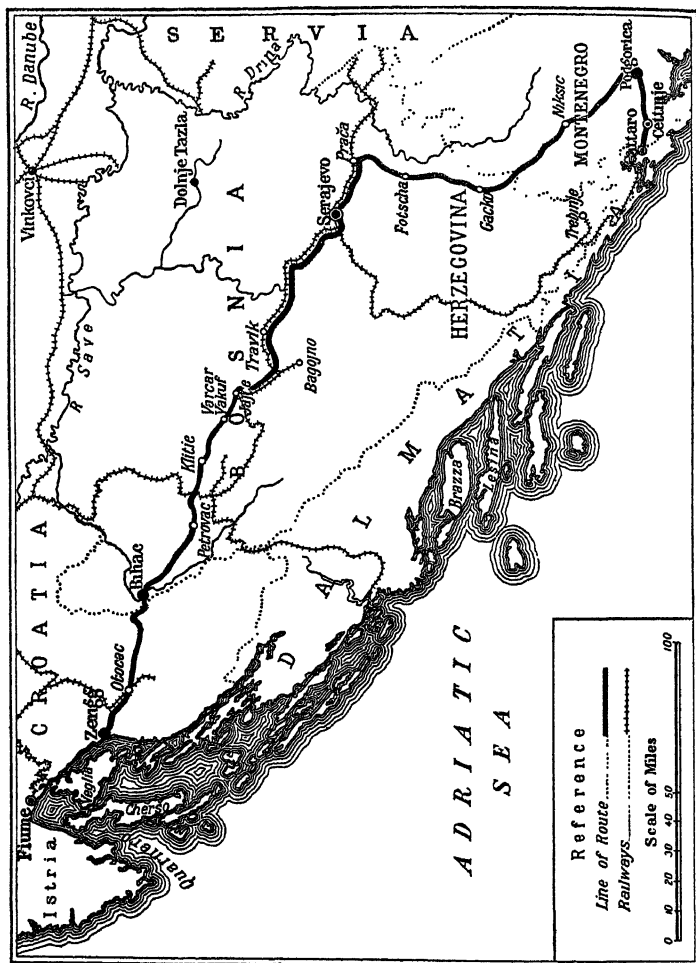
withstanding our efforts, we were bitten all night, and in the morning all three of us looked as if we were suffering from chicken-pox. Mother did not disguise her disgust at the sight of us as we streamed after her through the churches and picture galleries—dull with want of sleep, and perpetually painting ourselves with stuff provided by the chemist as a panacea for bites, and, of course, totally unable to appreciate the wonders we were shown.

It was then that Mother announced her intention of taking us across the Adriatic to Bosnia, Herzegovina and Montenegro, and for once in my life I plucked up sufficient courage to object to going. It must be remembered that in 1899, when we went there, Bosnia and Herzegovina were Mohammedan countries belonging to Turkey, but had been occupied since 1878 by Austria-Hungary, whose gendarmerie, under Baron Kallay, patrolled the country and kept order amongst the Mohammedan and Christian Serbs who constituted the population.

We knew nothing about the country and were without any letters of introduction. Indeed my Father had no idea we were leaving Venice, and by the time he got our letters telling him so we should be fairly launched into Bosnia with only the vaguest idea of our route and objective. Also, though I was in the early twenties, my sisters were very young, Kathleen only a child. However, our Mother having decided on our going, the first thing to do was to try to find a map. After a lot of hunting we found one which proved to be very inaccurate, but was better than nothing. We also found that a small steamer was leaving almost at once for Trieste, and it was decided that we should go by her.

Once at Trieste we knew that we could easily get

## Excursions and Some Adventures



## *Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Montenegro*

over to Fiume, and there pick up one of the little local steamers that went regularly down the Dalmatian coast of the Adriatic, calling at the various ports on their way. Our plans had the merit of being simple. We climbed on board the steamer for Trieste, and after that our fate lay in the lap of the gods.

We only stayed for a few hours at Trieste, which we thought a very pleasant, clean town, taking the train as soon as we could for Fiume. We passed through hilly country covered with small trees, none taller than a telegraph-pole. The land looked as wet as a sponge, and yet we saw hardly a stream of any sort in our four hours' journey. Fiume, where we stayed for a couple of days, was a small replica of Trieste. The horses were beautiful, generally white or grey, and much the make of a small Percheron.

The bathing at Fiume was delightful, the water so clear that every stone could be counted at a depth of ten feet. The little bay in which we bathed was enclosed by a heavy net composed of strong iron rings; we wondered why it was there, and scrambling over it, splashed about in the open sea beyond. That same afternoon we saw a large shark landed, just caught and still half alive. The people told us that those sharks came from the Red Sea through the Suez Canal, and that the iron nets had had to be provided because of the numbers of bathers who had been attacked by them.

At Fiume we embarked on another little steamer. After passing a number of islands, destitute at that time of trees, we landed at the first tiny port we stopped at, a rough little fishing town called Zengg, in Croatia, one of the most arid, dreary spots I had ever seen. Backed by high hills of parched grey rock stripped of trees, the little town seemed to be clinging by its eyelids to the baked and wind-swept shore. The only

## *Excursions and Some Adventures*

tolerably large house to be seen was the Greek Bishop's Palace, though anything less like a palace it would be difficult to imagine. We saw only a square building with green shutters, dazzling white, with no protection whatever against a fierce August sun.

Once landed we discovered that there was a fête going on in the town, and that not a room was to be had for love or money. It looked as if we should have to spend the night sitting on our luggage on the quay, when suddenly the hotel-keeper had a brilliant idea and suggested the theatre. To the theatre we went. It was quite empty and had about a dozen doors, not one of which could we lock or bolt. The windows were festooned with strings of onions drying for the winter, while the stage was set with what looked like a realistic representation of Dante's *Inferno*, so many hobgoblins were depicted upon it. Nothing disturbed us, however. Our four little camp beds were put up, Mother's being placed almost under the Greek Bishop's state box, and there we slept regardless of the rats that capered about on the floor and of a man who came in during the night with a lantern and, walking slowly across the stage, disappeared behind it.

It didn't seem to us much of a fête for the poor townspeople that didn't even include a "show" in their one and only theatre! They seemed simple folk, content to crowd into the main street and walk about arm-in-arm. As to national costumes, there were none.

The following morning we left in a rough four-wheeled carriage en route for a little town called Bihac, a four days' drive into Bosnia. As we got further from the coast the dress of the people became more picturesque. The men had all the free carriage of mountaineers and held themselves like kings; they

## *Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Montenegro*

wore baggy white breeches, wide red leather belts, and red caps, which they took off most politely as we passed. They certainly looked utter barbarians, like the proverbial brigands in a play, but when we smiled and bowed they beamed at us in return. I believe most people who have come in contact with these peasants have respect and affection for them, while as fighters they are acknowledged to be superb. The one difficulty the Austrians had—who otherwise seemed to manage them admirably—was to prevent their fighting each other in the absence of a common enemy. For generations most of them had been brigands, spending their time looting anyone rash enough to venture into their neighbourhood. When they felt dull they could always cheer themselves up by a dash over the mountains into a neighbouring valley, slitting a few noses and carrying away the women and cattle. No wonder they found it a little hard to settle down after a life like that.

The Mohammedan women were, of course, closely veiled, the Christian women were not, but all carried their dowries about with them in the shape of silver coins stitched upon the bodies of their gowns. Many of the women were stiff with them, and the weight must have been considerable. I suppose it was the safest way of carrying their wealth in a country where banks are unknown, at any rate to the bulk of the population. We calculated that the coins on one woman represented about fifty pounds in English money; many displayed coins totalling from fifteen pounds to twenty pounds in value.

Our road from Zengg went steadily uphill until our aneroid marked 3000 feet above sea-level. We met many tiny trucks, drawn by teams of wild little oxen, bringing down timber. It took several trucks and many oxen to deal with each tree, some being forty to



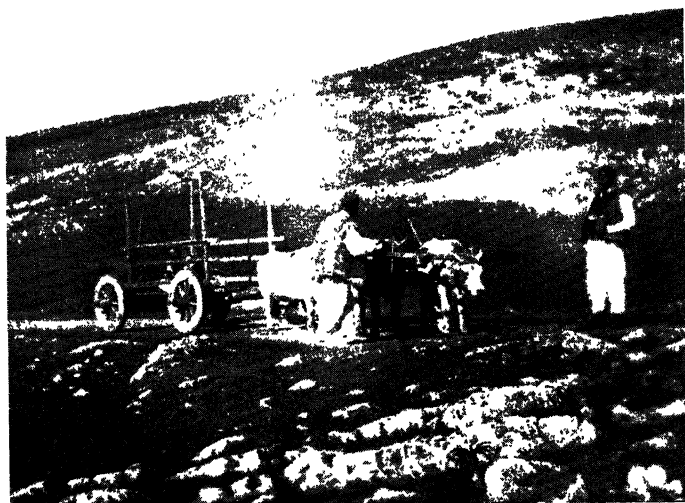
## *Excursions and Some Adventures*

fifty feet long, and rough-hewn to about two feet square the whole length. We slept at a clean little inn on the roadside, the occupants of which were much excited at seeing us, very few having seen Englishmen before, and never English ladies.

It was only the next morning that we discovered that we had made one terrible mistake, having taken a superior-looking man, who had understood our German and Italian much better than most of the people we met, to be the landlord of the inn. We had been very polite, which was fortunate, for he proved to be an Austrian magnate and Deputy-Governor of a province!

Once over the mountains at the back of Zengg we went down again into a wide valley, putting up at a village called Otocac. It was near here that we came across a succession of lakes, large and small, all remarkable for their colour—a translucent blue, such as we had never seen before. It was not the blue of glacier-water, nor that of the Mediterranean, but the blue of the bluest sky on a glorious spring day. Not only was the colour most lovely, but the lakes—which seemed numberless—were connected by waterfalls pouring into rocky basins so curiously formed as to give one the impression that they were artificial. All, we were told, were full of large trout. We saw no anglers, and from the look of the pools we came to the conclusion that they were not much fished. For beauty and delightful surroundings those lakes would be hard to beat, the waterfalls and pools making it ideal for fly-fishing, and if the fish were there, as there was no reason to doubt, I cannot imagine a more delightful spot in which to pass a few weeks in the spring.

At Otocac we changed our carriage and horses and engaged another equipage to take us on to Bihac in Bosnia. The little carriages were all the same, tiny



IN THE HIGH UPLANDS



BOSNIAN PEASANTS.

[To face p. 136.]



## *Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Montenegro*

victorias, with a pair of well-bred ponies to draw them, our luggage being strapped on behind. Our drivers were generally clad in bright-coloured shirts, and always wore a red fez with a black tassel hanging down behind. They were sociable persons and much too oriental to hurry, dawdling along and pulling up, when the spirit moved them, to exchange ideas with the passers-by. Near the coast they understood either a little Italian or German, and sometimes both, but further inland they understood neither, and talked to each other in a language of which we could make nothing. One day at the beginning of our journey we must have said something—goodness knows what—in the nature of a *double entendre*, or in our efforts to make ourselves understood and to explain where we wanted to go we may have mispronounced the name of a village and—quite unintentionally, of course—have said something most amusing and probably also most horribly improper. At least we guessed that something of the sort had happened, for the joke, whatever it was, went with us across Bosnia, each of our drivers handing it on to the next. Later on we recognised the symptoms so well that we could see the whole thing coming. Our old driver, the one we had just paid off, would sidle up to the new one, whom we had just engaged, and, indicating us with his thumb, Number One would begin to tell the story in a language mostly composed of clicks to those not understanding it. Number Two driver would listen, gaze at us, burst into laughter, stamp on the ground, mop his eyes, and otherwise show every sign of appreciation. We, of course, were left to wonder whether we ought to be sorry because we were missing a good laugh, or glad because, had we known what was being said, we might have been most miserably uncomfortable!

## *Excursions and Some Adventures*

After leaving Otocac our road twisted and turned amongst pretty hills, and though the map showed that they were 1100, 1182 and 1091 metres high, none of them looked it. Down in the valley it had been very hot; amongst the hills it was only pleasantly warm. Just before we reached Bihac we were overtaken by a storm. There was no time to look for shelter; in a few minutes the sky changed from clear blue to purple-black, and our thermometer almost visibly ran down from eighty-five degrees in the shade to fifty-six degrees. The rain came down in torrents and, though we were prepared with good stout waterproofs, we were quickly drenched to the skin and shivering with cold. Luckily Bihac possessed a nice little inn, managed by most civil, pleasant people, who looked after us well and dried our clothes.

It was near Bihac that we drove through one of the most lovely forests I have ever seen—miles of beech trees so tall, so straight, and their trunks such a lovely shade of tender grey, that it seemed like endless aisles of a Gothic cathedral. There was the same feeling here of quiet and repose. I would like to see that forest, if it still exists, in the spring-time, when, just for three or four days, newly-opened beech leaves are that peculiarly lovely colour which, for beauty, in my experience cannot be equalled. We drove for miles through trees, all as straight as arrows and from seventy to eighty feet high. One tree had just been felled and lay across the road; it measured seventy feet to the first branch, and was three feet in diameter at twenty-five feet from the ground. We had to wait while six foresters cleared the road, an operation that took two hours. Meanwhile several native bullock carts came up, and their drivers severally and individually swore at the foresters who, of course, swore back in what

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sounded like luridly bad language. Having exhausted their repertoire of choice expressions, the newcomers would calmly light cigarettes and sit down, while the foresters spat on their hands and resumed their work. Our driver tied the reins to his whip, and let his horses go to sleep, while he smoked and chaffed the foresters. We watched the great logs being sawn up and rolled out of the way. For myself I never see a fine tree cut down without a pang, and a feeling that for each one gone the world is so much the poorer and the duller.

Once outside the beech forest we found ourselves in a wide valley where not a fence was to be seen. All around was undulating green turf, dotted with herds of tan-coloured and brown cattle. Guarding them were the wildest-looking creatures, clad in big sheep-skin coats with the wool inside. We were 2000 feet above the sea, so the air was fresh and cool, but the sun was blazing hot, and we wondered how the herdsmen could stand the heat in those coats. We saw quite a number of wild bustards as large as turkeys, and several eagles floating overhead.

The next large village we came to—almost a town—was Varcar-Vakuf in Bosnia. Its little shops were very oriental, much like cupboards in a wall, their owners sitting huddled up on the floor, and apparently quite indifferent as to whether they sold anything or not. With our inaccurate map we found the spelling and pronunciation of the names of the different places extremely difficult—no two of the inhabitants seemed to agree as to the spelling, and with many the pronunciation differed as well. The Slavs, as a rule, spoke no language but their own, so the Austrian and Hungarian army officers were the only people on whom to depend for information. Most kind and helpful we invariably found them, but there again, an Austrian officer at one

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place often differed entirely in the pronunciation of a name from his brother officer, a Hungarian, in another village some way off. However, we jogged along very comfortably and felt, and I believe were, quite as safe as if we had stayed at Brighton.

One day we were calmly eating our evening meal at a little wayside inn when a Sergeant of Gendarmerie came in much excited, waving a large sheet of paper with a seal on it and looking "red tape" all over. The Sergeant counted us over twice to make sure there were four of us, and asked anxiously if we were quite sure we were English. He then handed us the paper and asked if we were by any chance the distinguished party of four gentlemen whose names were mentioned upon it, who were expected to arrive shortly on their way to Sarajevo, and who were to be given police protection against any possible danger on their way. Much amused, we read the paper with great interest, and found the names of four Members of Parliament, two of whom were personal friends. We fancied they would not be too pleased to find we had preceded them in perfect safety without any protection at all.

In many of the sheltered parts of Bosnia the corn had already been harvested, and in some places was being threshed. All the farms had threshing-floors; they were circular, made of mud or clay beaten down till it was quite smooth and as hard as iron. The corn to be threshed was laid two feet deep on the threshing-floor, and three or four or, on the rich farms, even five horses, roped abreast, galloped over it as hard as a man standing in the centre holding the rope could urge them. We felt certain that the idea of a circus must have originated from Bosnia, for the man holding the horses was dressed much like a clown, often wearing the typical pointed white cap and long, loose white jacket

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and trousers. On the poorer farms unfortunate oxen were going round and round doing the same work ; it seemed dull after the galloping horses. To winnow the corn the men flung it up into the air with wooden shovels, letting the wind blow away the chaff.

It was either at Jajce or Travnik that we were first introduced to a Bosnian railway, the only one at that time in the country. It extended, at a rough guess, just about thirty miles to the capital town of Sarajevo, and the little train took the whole day to get there. It was a narrow-gauge railway, without a fence of any sort on either side, which wriggled and coiled about on the banks of a river in a narrow valley. The high hills seemed to shut out the air, and a tropical sun beat down until the whole landscape danced in the heat. We took first-class tickets and were shown into the one first-class compartment on the train ; it was clean and very like a third-class one in England. Having seen our luggage safely on board and our luncheon hamper put safely on a seat, we walked down the platform to look at the other passengers, and found the guard, assisted by the station-master and the stoker, the only officials on view, busily engaged getting the fourth-class passengers aboard the train. The fourth-class compartments consisted of several luggage-vans, absolutely bare, without a seat of any kind. There were no proper windows, only four holes about six inches square and quite six feet from the ground. The only furniture—if one could so call it—was a couple of wooden bars like the perches in a bird-cage, fixed about two feet from the floor. Too narrow for seats, we wondered what they could be for.

In the meantime the passengers were being herded in ; there were men and children and heavily-veiled Slav women mixed up with bundles of clothes and



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live chickens ; all were talking at the top of their voices and all were intensely excited. No sooner had the long-suffering railway officials succeeded in getting some of them in than somebody remembered a baby or something else which had been forgotten, and all tumbled out again. Then the whole performance had to be gone through a second time. Of course the veiled women, having only a slit to look through, couldn't see the step, so generally landed like sacks on their heads on the floor, and almost always lost one slipper, if not both, in the process, which necessitated a male relation to recover them from under the wheels of the train, the agitated lady inside screaming in anticipation of her male relation being run over, or at least left behind. Then the rest of the passengers were somehow pushed in and sat jammed tightly together on the floor, frantically gripping the wooden bars to avoid being thrown against each other when the train started. When, at last, one van was safely stored with passengers, the guard would shut the door and lock it with a big key.

Having securely locked up the last of the fourth-class passengers, the officials took their caps off their perspiring heads and most politely asked if we were ready to start, and if we would mind a gentleman travelling in our compartment. It appeared that there had not been such a run on first-class tickets for some time, five in one day was most unusual, hence the lack of accommodation. We raised no objection, of course, and an elderly and most respectable-looking old gentleman, clad in deep black, was introduced to us in a sort of way by the station-master ; and with many bows on both sides the five of us got in.

Then followed mysterious sounds from the engine and a fearful bump that nearly sent us, the elderly

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gentleman and the luncheon basket, into a heap on the floor. There followed a dead silence. We put our heads out of the window to see what had happened, but could see nothing, while the old gentleman, evidently afraid we were going to scream or faint or otherwise behave in a ladylike manner, tried to reassure us in German even worse than our own. His amiable remarks were drowned by three whistles from the tiny engine that nearly deafened us, and awoke the echoes in the hills all round, and then, with another bump that again sent us reeling, we started off at the giddy pace of about six miles an hour. But not for long! With a fearful jerk we came suddenly to a full stop and, looking out, saw about twenty young cattle on the line, staring at our engine with stolid bovine stupidity and refusing to move. The guard again came to the front, and with the stoker chased the silly creatures up the line and tried to get them off the rails, but the grass growing on the line was evidently the best food round about, and the cattle were loath to leave it; besides, a river and a nasty steep bank leading abruptly down to it on one side, and a wood of small fir trees growing among large rocks on the other, offered no attractive alternative. The cattle preferred the line and stuck to it in defiance of all. We longed to get out, but Mother would not hear of it. The half-dozen second- and third-class passengers in the train leaned out of their windows and cheered on the heated guard and stoker, while the wretched fourth-class passengers, locked up in their vans, unable to see what was happening, showed their anxiety by repeated bumping, and kept up a humming sound as of a gigantic hive of bees; for all they knew to the contrary death might be imminent; no wonder they were uneasy!

Finally the guard and stoker returned, defeated

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and dripping with perspiration. Then the engine-driver proved himself a man of resource; he sent the engine along at a crawl, shooting repeated jets of steam on to the hind-quarters of the cattle and, after a mile or so of this gentle persuasion, they got tired of it and suddenly precipitating themselves into the wood, left us free to proceed at a somewhat greater speed.

Our next halt was at a tiny station, a combined ticket office and station-master's house. Although our train was the only one that went through in the day, there were but two passengers waiting on the diminutive platform. However, what the two passengers lacked in numbers they made up for in size; they were two extremely fat monks, belonging, we supposed, to the Greek Church, and quite the most ponderous we had ever seen. They wore brown habits with ropes round that part of them where their waists ought to have been—but decidedly were not. They had sandals on their feet and small black pot hats on their heads, while, for fear they might be overtaken by thirst on the journey, they were taking refreshments with them, for each carried in either hand a pewter pot of foaming beer, which he watched anxiously as they squeezed through the door of a third-class carriage. We wondered what would happen to the beer when the usual bumps began preliminary to starting the train, but no doubt the monks would see to that and drink some of it forthwith as a precautionary measure.

I think it was the sight of the beer that reminded us that it was lunch-time. The little train having once more jerked itself into motion, we opened our basket and began. The old gentleman in the corner had been quite quiet for some time. He had been overcome by the heat, and beyond frequently mopping himself had shown few signs of life, but he cheered up at the sight

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of our food and, it being obvious that he had none of his own, we invited him to have some of ours. Our lunch consisted of hard-boiled eggs and the cheese and excellent bread and butter of the country, washed down with coffee. Gently we pushed our basket towards our fellow-passenger and begged him to help himself. We had quite overlooked a tin of Keating's that had been thrust into the basket at the last moment; not so the elderly gentleman, for a little later one of my sisters in a horrified voice said, "Good gracious! he has mistaken the flea-powder for pepper and is eating it." Sure enough the old gentleman had just swallowed an egg covered with it, and evidently thought it good. Horror-stricken, we expected to see him writhing in agony on the floor, and I vainly searched my mind for the German for insect powder. Mother was quite unmoved. "It's only pyrethrum," she said. "It can't hurt him." So the old gentleman continued to powder his eggs undisturbed by us, and certainly seemed none the worse for it.

Our next stop was near a bridge where the line crossed the river. This time we could see no reason for pulling up; the line appeared to be clear, and there was no sign of a passenger waiting to get in. Then the guard appeared jingling the keys of the fourth-class vans; he unlocked the doors and the semi-asphyxiated passengers, tumbling out, rolled down the bank and drank at the river until one thought they must burst. They had been shut up for nearly three hours without light or air in an oven-like atmosphere. When the time came to be off again they were exceedingly reluctant to re-enter the train. The engine whistled, the guard and the stoker commanded and entreated—it seemed in vain. At last, after pulling some of the women up the bank and, we imagined, bribing the

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others by a promise to stop at frequent intervals to allow of more water-drinking, they were induced to return, after which we proceeded on our journey.

The afternoon was a repetition of the morning. We stopped occasionally to pick up or put down a passenger at something that might perhaps pass for a station. More often it was a level spot where a track crossed the line. Wherever the bank was low enough for them to scramble down, the fourth-class passengers were kept alive with draughts of river water, while we sat dozing, overcome by the effects of luncheon and the heat combined.

Flea-powder may be something of a sedative, for the old gentleman slept away the hot afternoon with his mouth open. He only shut it and woke up when, with a final bump, our train pulled up in the station at Sarajevo, the capital town of Bosnia. Little did we dream that it was later on to become notorious as the scene of the murder of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir-presumptive to the throne of Austria-Hungary, and his unfortunate wife.

Sarajevo we found a pleasant little town with a comfortable hotel and narrow shady streets. The first thing we did was to sally out in search of money, Mother realising for the first time that this might be a little difficult to procure, as she was provided only with a cheque-book. However, as usual, we fell on our feet. The Austrian banker at once produced one hundred and fifty pounds in the money of the country, and insisted on taking us to his private house and introducing us to his wife, who, in her turn, insisted on taking us to a fête which, according to her, was a thing we must not miss, so beautiful, so unique, so interesting was it. The banker's wife spoke to us in such glowing terms that when the time came to

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squeeze ourselves into a carriage and drive to it we younger ones felt quite thrilled.

Our first view of the entertainment was disappointing. We arrived at a very ordinary-looking beer-garden, adorned with numerous little iron tables, and bright with coloured glass globes stuck upon sticks, while in the centre was a merry-go-round with several Turks clinging to the necks of the spotted horses, and going round and round to the even then antiquated tune of "Daisy, Daisy, give me your answer, do! I've gone crazy, all for the love of you."

The banker's wife suggested that we should each mount a spotted horse directly the machine stopped, which none of us felt inclined to do, all three of us realising that we should immediately be sick. While we were speculating as to how to get out of it, an old Turk shuffled up and shook hands with the banker's wife, who introduced him all round in bad French. The Turk was not a prepossessing-looking person. He had an oily yellow face; even the whites of his eyes, which rolled about in an ogreish way, were yellow. He was very fat, and dressed in what looked like a piece of window curtain, held together by a cord round his waist. He had the usual red fez at the back of his head, and his bare heels stuck out of slippers which curled up in front.

Mother had tried the banker's wife and had found her wanting and, never being one of those who suffer fools gladly, she now left her to us and, turning her attention to the old Turk, sat down with him at one of the little iron tables and ordered black coffee. The Turk was delighted. He sat with his feet curled round the back of his chair, rolling his eyes and a cigarette at the same time, and airing his best French. We left the two getting along admirably.

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It was a horrible afternoon. We walked round the hideous garden trying to make conversation with the obviously bored banker's wife. We admired a dreadful fountain and poked an unfortunate goldfish with a stick. There was nothing to look at and nothing to do except be sick on the merry-go-round or sit and drink coffee and the plum brandy of the country.

We were walking round in a dreary way when Mother suddenly appeared, obviously exceedingly annoyed, while the Turk was nowhere to be seen. She briefly explained to the not unwilling banker's wife that we must return. We scrambled silently back into the carriage and then learned what had happened. At first, it appears, the Turk had been politeness itself, and he and Mother had agreed on every possible subject. Then the conversation had turned upon the price of things and, incidentally, upon the price of wives, on which subject it appeared the Turk was an authority.

"And at what value," inquired Mother, "would you put my eldest daughter, always supposing she were for sale?"

The Turk mentioned a sum which we were not told, but which we gathered was flatteringly high.

Mother was much pleased.

"And my second daughter?" she inquired again.

The Turk mentioned a still higher price—of course he reckoned by age. While as to the third daughter, my little flapper sister, the price was highest of all.

"And now," said Mother, "what price for me?"

Alas, the Turk was no diplomat! He promptly mentioned fourpence-halfpenny or the equivalent in Bosnian currency. Mother was furious. Never, no never, had she been so insulted before! She drew her skirts round her and swept away, leaving the

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astonished Turk absolutely speechless, and wondering, I suppose, what on earth he had done to annoy her.

The shops in Sarajevo were very attractive and very oriental. There were quaint hand-made pots of delightful shapes and colours. There were bags of stamped leather, and brass-handled knives and daggers of the cut-throat-cum-brigand variety. There was very little fruit, and what there was was bad. We saw no fish-shops and carefully avoided the butchers, who hung up horrible-looking pieces like no joint that was ever seen.

Mother, who never willingly stayed more than a day or two in the same place, soon tired of Sarajevo and decided to push on towards Montenegro. Finding a place on the map called Prača, somewhat in the right direction, to Prača we went. We had now got into Herzegovina, and found it a different country altogether from Bosnia.

Herzegovina is a country of narrow valleys between high, sterile mountains; of rushing rivers and bare, wind-swept rocks. Down below it was very hot; tobacco grew wherever there was room for a little patch of cultivation, and many plum trees, laden with purple fruit from which the potent plum brandy, known as "Slievowitz," is made. Amongst the rocks grew masses of wild castor oil and other sub-tropical plants. In the spring there must be quantities of flowers, but now only a few withered stalks showed where they had been.

Among the interesting people we saw were the gipsies. They lived in rough-looking tents pitched, as a rule, on the banks of the rivers. They were dark and swarthy, like the gipsies we see in England, only wilder and more dangerous-looking. They wore bright-coloured clothes, vivid red and yellow, with



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gold ornaments. Small children, up to about seven or eight, were running about without any clothes. Of course the weather was hot, but still it is an unusual sight in Europe.

At Prača we found the inn full of Austrian and Hungarian officers. They were most kind, and told us the best way to get over the frontier into Montenegro, for the road ended at Prača. None of them had been into Montenegro, that country being, of course, an independent kingdom, but they knew of a pass over the mountains which was feasible for ponies, and advised us to go to Fotscha first and then on from there. We asked about the river, and they told us it was full of salmon, but they never seemed to fish themselves, nor did they appear to take any interest in shooting, though they said there were plenty of bear and chamois to be found in the mountains.

We there laid in a stock of provisions, for, judging by the look of the mountains above Prača, we expected that for the next few days our route would be rough. As regards food, I suppose all over Bosnia and Herzegovina most people would say it was bad, but I do not think it is fair to say that of any country where there is good bread, good cheese, and always delicious coffee. No place so small but in a few minutes a cup of fresh coffee was to be had, made in the Turkish manner, while, if you wished, you could also get the plum brandy, a white liquid, very strong but tasteless.

We also looked over the ponies that had been engaged for us, which meant having their packs taken off to assure ourselves that their backs were all right and seeing that they were properly shod.

Later we were taken to the officers' club, a pathetic little place with no carpet, a small billiard table, piano, six kitchen chairs and a couple of tables. That

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was all, unless one includes a large iron stove for winter use.

The General was leaping about on the tennis court in an unsuccessful effort to keep thin. He was very gallant, and regretted the fact that, being married, he was unable to dine at the hotel and thus enjoy more of our society. After an exhausting hour of polite conversation we made the fact of our departure at 5 a.m. the following day a reason for leaving, and went to have a bath before dinner. We had noticed a bathing place built over the river, a sort of shed with a thing like a cattle dip in front of it, through which the stream rushed like a torrent. The water was very cold, though the air was warm, and whether it was that bath or the German language that affected my throat I don't know, but for three days thereafter I was speechless and could only whisper, a most annoying state of things where so much depended on my efforts.

At five the next morning we were ready to start. Our six ponies and two strapping Turks were also ready, and we found four officers waiting to go with us. They had parcelled themselves out, the regimental doctor attaching himself to Mother. Of course there were no saddles on the ponies, only packs with a good peak before and behind, so it was only possible to fall off sideways. I was superintending the proper loading of the luggage and so had the edification of watching the doctor, who apparently meditated lifting Mother on to her pony, but thought better of it and fetched a chair instead. Mother intended sitting sideways on the near side of the pack, but the doctor evidently expected that she would ride astride like German ladies, so he seized her leg in mid air and in consequence very nearly brought her down on the top of his head.

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The Austrian officer who had attached himself to me watched this with consternation. I jumped at the chance of getting rid of him, and basely suggested that he should go and help; he darted off, and while his back was turned, I put my foot into an arrangement that looked like a saucepan, but was really a stirrup, and by the time he got back was safely balanced on the side of my pack.

For three hours the poor young men walked beside us on a rough track that zigzagged up the side of the mountain. Then they announced that they must return, so we began to say good-bye. They photographed us and we photographed them. We wrote our names and they wrote theirs. We shook hands, not once but several times all round, and even when we parted mutually waved handkerchiefs till they disappeared, poor things. They seemed to be living poverty-stricken, miserable lives, where others would have found sport and have had an enjoyable and interesting time.

Climbing out of the valley with the sun on our backs and sheltered from the wind was warm work. Once on the top we met for the first time that deadly cold wind, the Boreas. Winter and summer it blows across those God-forsaken heights. There were no trees; a few bushes grew in sheltered spots, bent and flattened by the wind. There were no flowers, only pools of brown bog-water and rushes in the wet places, and stretches of weather-beaten grey stone in the dry. Above us were bare rocks, with patches of snow on the north side only a couple of hundred feet away. It was bitterly cold and, being quite unprepared and in summer clothes, we were frozen; and walked most of the time to try to keep warm. We ate our lunch in the shelter of a rock, but soon started off again, afraid to linger on the way.



VEILED MOHAMMEDAN WOMEN.



THE AUSTRIAN AND HUNGARIAN OFFICERS.

*[To face p. 152]*



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Our guides were dressed in the usual sheepskin coats with the wool inside. They were splendid big fellows, but, alas! we knew nothing of their language. The one who seemed to know the way best—for there was no path—led the first pony. The others, led by us, were sensible animals and followed behind, except one white pony that carried some of our luggage and was a stupid creature. It objected to being led, and instead of following its friends, it would try to strike out a new road for itself, and generally ended by getting into a bog and sinking until only its head and the ends of our boxes were to be seen. With blue fingers we then held the other ponies, while the Turks, balanced on tufts of rushes, pulled one at the head, the other at the tail, of the white one. After frantic efforts he would be hauled out and stand there shivering, having changed from white to black. For a short time all would be well, until he would once more go astray, and the whole process have to be repeated all over again.

We took the whole day getting over those mountains, and in the afternoon our guides seemed to be none too sure of their way. It was then that two gendarmes suddenly appeared, having been sent out from Fotscha to look for us. Our kind friends the officers had telegraphed on to say that we were coming, hence this welcome help. After that all was well. We were carefully conducted down a steep hillside, and found ourselves at the gendarmerie barracks, a square house planted down among the bleak hills without a tree or a vestige of a garden, nothing to relieve the dreary, wind-swept outlook.

If the landscape was chill, nothing could have been warmer than the welcome we had from the Commandant. He ushered us in and told us he had arranged that we should spend the night in the barracks.

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This was most comforting, for, as we could see for ourselves, there was obviously nowhere else for us to go. Still, it was quite a new experience to spend the night in a barracks of any sort, and it was quite certain that no ladies had ever done so before, for there was a buzz of excitement everywhere, the Commandant being the most excited of the lot.

With many bows he took us through a large room full of beds, where policemen stood at attention and saluted, into a further room which, we were told, was at our disposal for the night. It contained fourteen little beds! We were much touched by all this consideration for our comfort. "But," we asked, "what about your men to whom these beds evidently belong?"

"What of them!" cried the Commandant, dismissing all thought of them with a wave of his hand. "They are all right. I have sent them out on to the mountains for the night. It is summer, is it not?"

We remembered how cold we had been and wondered what it could be like in winter.

"They are honoured that you should condescend to sleep in their beds, even when they are not there," cried the Commandant, who struck us as being very much of a ladies' man, so we hastily changed the subject and asked about our two Turks and the ponies.

"I shall send them back to-morrow, and you shall have others to take you to Gacko. Leave all to me," cried the Commandant, striking an attitude and thumping his heart. "I will give orders immediately; I go now." And away he went.

The room we were in looked very much like a ward in a hospital. Over each little bed was the name of the policeman to whom it belonged. Strange Russian names they were—Ivan Ivanovitch, Bosnovic Vatkuf, and so on, with their regimental numbers. The only

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means of getting in or out of our room was through one already full of men, while the window was secured with solid iron bars—no getting out that way. We sat down on four out of the fourteen little beds and wondered what would happen next. We did not have to wait long. We heard several words of command issued in a gruff military voice in the next room, then the scuffling and tramp of heavy boots. Our door was flung open and, without a knock or intimation of any kind, a sergeant of police marched in, followed by four privates. The sergeant saluted us, and the five marched up the room in step one behind the other. At a word of command from the sergeant they drew up in line with much clicking of heels. The first policeman carried a jug and basin, the second some sheets and towels and so on. They had thought most carefully of everything we could possibly want for the night. We were very grateful indeed, but felt an almost irresistible inclination to laugh. Very carefully the sergeant took the various articles one by one from his subordinates and arranged them in a row on the one and only table. He then inquired of the highly-born ones which of the fourteen beds each would prefer. To our eyes the whole fourteen looked exactly alike, but the sergeant knew better. He poked them with a knowing finger and selected four for us, and then inquired whether we would prefer winter or summer beds? Having decided that important point, the privates fell to and put on the sheets, making the beds as if they had done nothing else all their lives, after which we went and sat on hard kitchen chairs round a bare table, while the evening meal was being prepared in a beautifully clean kitchen by a nice policeman-cook who wore a white apron tied over his uniform.



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My family had hard work to keep up polite conversation with the Commandant. I was still speechless, my cold not having been improved by a day on the mountains. For my sake a large iron stove was lighted, and the heat it gave out was sweltering. Then the kind Commandant produced plum brandy and insisted on my having some, though it nearly took the skin off my throat.

At last a white tablecloth was spread and we were told to draw up our chairs to the table. Mother sat next to the Commandant. As I was useless as a conversationalist, Engla was placed on his other side. Our host tucked his dinner napkin into his collar, whilst we spread ours over our knees; but that was not at all the sergeant's idea of how things should be done. He seized upon Kathleen as the youngest of the party, and offended her dreadfully by trying to spread her napkin under her chin and tie it in a bow at the back of her neck. Grasping wherein we had erred, we compromised as best we could, and the sergeant, somewhat appeased, disappeared. There was more scuffling of ammunition boots outside the door and then more gruff commands, and again the sergeant entered, leading another procession. This time policeman Number One carried a large smoking soup tureen, Number Two the soup plates, and Number Three a collection of spoons. There was more clicking of heels and more commands rang out before the tureen was finally placed before the Commandant, the cover whipped off, and we were allowed to begin. It was indeed a lengthy meal, the same formalities being observed each time a course was brought in or removed.

It was when the beer arrived that a slight hitch occurred. Engla explained that we did not drink

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beer. The Commandant could not believe his ears. "No beer after a day in the mountains, and the gracious Fräulein suffering from a bad cold, as it was clear to anyone she was. No beer! Impossible!" Engla began again, but the sergeant was a family man and knew how to deal with women: without paying the least attention to what either Engla or the Commandant was saying, he put down a large glass in front of each of us, and I for one found it good.

It was a terrible meal indeed, what with the beer and the hot soup, not to mention the iron stove, now nearly red hot. I have seldom been so warm before or since, and was thankful when the sergeant and his satellites removed the last course—a dish of sugary tapioca of the variety we used to call "frogs' eggs." I hoped then that we might be allowed to go to bed, but not at all! The Commandant rose to his feet, bowed all round, and with mingled feelings we grasped that he intended to make a speech. To sing "For he's a jolly good fellow" was impossible, but we did our best by thumping the table with anything handy, to show our appreciation of the Commandant's kindness. There were more bows all round after that, and then our host cleared his throat and began.

It was a long speech, in German, of course, and I understood, or think I understood, one word in three. I am quite certain that none of the others did any better in that respect. There was a great deal about an aunt of the Commandant's, who, it seemed, lived in Agram, and was the presumably happy possessor of five hundred gulden. The whole speech circulated round those five hundred gulden, though whether the lady intended giving them to her nephew or leaving them to him in her will, or was threatening to leave them to the equivalent in Agram of the Home for

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Lost Dogs, that we shall never know. One thing, however, was certain—the five hundred gulden were inextricably mixed up with the Commandant's heart, for he kept thumping with his fist that portion of his tunic where hearts are usually supposed to reside.

"Mein Herz," said the Commandant, smiting himself and speaking in moving accents. "Meine Tante in Agram—fünf hundert Gulden." Over and over again he repeated it.

A dreadful suspicion grew on me. It was Engla who put it into words: "I think he is proposing to one of us," she whispered, "and I can't make out which."

"It can't be me," said Kathleen in a low voice, finishing her beer. "I'm too young; that's one comfort."

"I think it's *you*," continued Engla, addressing me. "I'm almost sure it's you. How much is five hundred gulden?"

"Just about the price of my ball frocks," I replied hoarsely, contemplating the Commandant and wondering at my sister's hardness of heart.

"You wouldn't want any here, you know," was all she said. Then a dreadful thought struck her: "Do you think it can be Mother, after all, and he thinks she's a widow?"

This horrible suggestion cast a gloom over us, and we were suddenly overcome by a dreadful feeling of responsibility towards our absent Father.

"If it's Mother, she's done for," said Kathleen, deeply moved; "she's been saying nothing but 'ja, ja' all the evening."

It was only too true! Anxious to be amiable, Mother was nodding her head and acquiescing in everything the Commandant was saying, without having the least idea what he was talking about.

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"Engla must tell him she isn't a widow," said Kathleen in a whisper.

"I can't," said Engla promptly. "I can't remember the word in German."

For the life of me I couldn't think of it either. Of course, my sisters didn't know—widows were never mentioned in schoolrooms in our days, the whole breed were restricted in our minds to novels, and doubtful French ones at that.

"Just say in a casual way that our Father is in England," suggested Kathleen.

"He'd only think he's buried there," replied Engla gloomily.

With a sort of hopeless feeling we listened to the Commandant.

"You are leaving to-morrow, you are going to Gacko," he was saying. "They expect you at Gacko: the telegram has reached them. From there you go to Niksic—but can it be? Is it possible you will return? You will come back?" He looked imploringly at Mother.

"Ja, ja," she said, nodding her head.

"You will? You will?" cried the Commandant.

"Ja, ja," repeated Mother, still nodding.

The Commandant seized his glass and raised it.

"Auf Wiedersehen!" he cried.

We jumped to our feet. "Auf Wiedersehen!" we echoed as one man, seizing our glasses and clicking them all round. We were not coming back, but no matter. The situation was saved. "Auf Wiedersehen!"

The sergeant came in with a smelly paraffin lamp. He had come to take us to bed. We followed him through the room where already fourteen honest policeman-heads were asleep on fourteen hard little pillows.

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As I crawled into my summer bed my heart went up in thankfulness that it was not my fate to have to live on five hundred gulden at Agram, nor yet at Fotscha, but then perhaps I was deluding myself—it may have been Mother, after all.

After leaving Fotscha we scrambled up and down more mountains, very like those of the previous day. There were the same treacherous bogs for our ponies to tumble into, and we had the same difficulty in pulling them out.

Cheered by the prospect of our speedy return, the poor Commandant was in excellent spirits. I took care not to disillusion him, and I am sure nobody else did; while we all did our best to make him understand how grateful we were for his kindness to us.

At midday we arrived at a *caserne*, where some Austrian troops were quartered, and where we had been told we should be able to get something to eat. It was a wretched place. Like a square white box set down on the top of a bare hill, its only ornamentation was a fringe of lightning conductors on the roof, while the one feature in the landscape which the hundred and ten unfortunate soldiers who lived there had to gaze at was an extremely well-furnished graveyard. Some optimist had planted a sort of avenue of young trees leading to it; nearly all were dead, and the few bent and melancholy survivors only added to the dreariness of the outlook.

The inside of the soldiers' *caserne* was as depressing as the outside. They had a canteen of sorts, where our two Turks drank brandy and refused everything else; they evidently knew the place. It was so dirty that we had to content ourselves with some bread and cheese and, after feeding our animals, pushed on quickly to Gacko, for there were heavy clouds about; indeed,

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soon after we left it began to rain, so we could see but little of the country, and by the time we arrived were drenched to the skin.

At Gacko we found more gendarmes, and a barracks as clean and nice as that of the soldiers had been dirty and depressing. Again a police-bedroom was handed over to us, a fire lighted to dry our clothes and everything possible done for our comfort. The one difficulty was to keep up polite conversation when very tired and overcome by sleep after spending the day scrambling about on the hills. We did our best, but I for one was thankful when at last we were able to crawl into bed.

During the night I was awakened by a noise, and was rather startled to find a policeman poking about in our room. He told me he was looking for our boots, kind man! He meant to clean them for us, a luxury we had come to look upon as quite superfluous.

From Gacko we were to cross into Montenegro over a pass about 4000 feet above the sea. We got off as early as we could, for we knew we were going to have a long day, but we little thought it was going to be seventeen hours before we again found a roof over our heads. About midday we reached some melancholy-looking cottages, their roofs weighed down with large slabs of stone to prevent their being blown off in the winter gales. Some fine big men—we saw no women—came out to speak to us, and begged us to spend the night there; so did the police Commandant; they all said bad weather was coming, but a peep into one of the huts was enough—we could not face the dirt, and determined to push on.

It was here that we parted with the Commandant, Number Two, and his men, and then our troubles began, for in a short time the rain came down in sheets and the

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track, which up till then had been quite passable, now turned into a watercourse. Owing to the mud and water neither we nor our ponies could see where to put our feet—for, of course, we were walking—and constantly we stepped into holes and fell full length. Occasionally the rain stopped for a few minutes and we could see fresh snow lying on the mountain peaks above us. No wonder we were cold!

The climax arrived when the rain turned to mist, the clouds came down on the mountain and our guides announced that they had lost the way.

We couldn't understand their language, but when two men stop, spread out their hands, shrug their shoulders, shake their heads and stand looking at you dismally with the water pouring off their sheepskin coats, it is easy enough to grasp what they mean. I can see now in my mind's eye that little mountain valley. I remember the sheets of mauve autumn crocus that were growing in masses in the short mountain grass at our feet, while shutting us in on every side were the soft grey banks of mist, silently drifting past us like a procession of ghosts.

Mother and I were getting into despair when two savage dogs suddenly appeared and rushed at us open-mouthed. Our men received them with a volley of stones, but we were glad to see them, knowing it meant that there were people near us and therefore help could not be very far off. Leaving the others with the ponies, one Turk and I followed the dogs, who, retreating, growling and barking, led us to a small round hut made of branches and skins. The entrance certainly was not higher than three feet from the ground and, I think, less.

Out of this wretched place crawled an old man with red eyes and matted hair. He first fell upon the dogs

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with a stick, and then looked as if he would like to have a go at me and the Turk as well. My hands were so stiff with the cold it was with the greatest difficulty I managed to pull some silver out of my bag; my cheeks too were so stiff that I was unequal to producing an ingratiating smile, but I managed a sort of grin and, offering the old man the silver, I repeated "Niksic," the name of the place we wanted to go to, over and over again.

The horrid old man would have none of it. He understood, for he jabbered something and indicated the clouds with a hairy arm like a baboon, and shook his matted locks. I didn't know what to do, when, out of the house, appeared a girl. A wild thing she was, but a degree more attractive than her dreadful old father. I twisted my frozen cheeks again into a semblance of a smile, and again offered the silver, repeating "Niksic, Niksic," as before. She hesitated—I saw a gleam in her eye. Quickly I pressed a coin into her paw—one couldn't call it a hand—and indicated that at Niksic she should have the rest. She nodded her head and started off; the Turk and I followed her, and soon came to the place where we had left the others.

They were a forlorn-looking group. The rain was again coming down in torrents, washing little rills in the mud with which they were plastered. Mother was yellow in front and black behind, for she had fallen into a mud hole and had sunk up to her elbows in it, while the family complexion had turned into red and blue from the cold. They were cheered, however, by the sight of the girl, who led the way—the clouds and rain made no difference to her—while we followed as best we could.

To fall full length is never pleasant, but when one



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is very cold it is doubly painful. We all fell several times in the muddy stream that constituted the pass over those mountains. As we got down into Montenegro on the further side it became much warmer, and, pushing on as fast as we could, it was nevertheless 11.30 that night when we at last arrived at Niksic. The wild-looking girl was splendid; she had taken us safely all the way, showing us the only place in which to ford a river, until we arrived at a road where she intimated that we could then look after ourselves, and gratefully I handed over to her her well-deserved reward.

Once arrived, the little inn, which did not look much outside, so far as we could judge in the dark, we found most comfortable. The kind people gave us hot water with some sort of spirit in it, which effectually warmed us, and getting into bed we slept soundly until the next morning. When we awoke not one of us was the worse for our seventeen hours' walk on as bad a day as could well be found.

When we came downstairs, rather late—for Mother had been merciful—we found a gorgeous individual waiting for us. This was an Equerry to Prince Nicholas of Montenegro, as he was then, for he did not proclaim himself King until many years later. The Equerry explained in excellent French that, hearing of our arrival, he had come to place himself at our disposal and to ask if there was anything he could do for us. He was a splendid person, quite six feet in height, as all the men in Montenegro seemed to be. He was dressed in a scarlet and blue coat embroidered with gold, with gold buttons down the front. He had high jack-boots and blue breeches, while thrust into his gold sash were a revolver and several daggers.



THE SHEPHERDS WORE SHEEPSKIN COATS.



THE EQUERRY AND THE CHANCELLOR.



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He was most anxious to help us, but we could not think of anything we wanted, until I suggested that I would much like to have a bath. This was evidently a difficult matter, baths not being common, it seemed, in Montenegro. The Equerry said he must think how it could be managed, but held out hopes that by the evening he might be able to procure one for me.

"You are wonderful!" he said. "Two other English people came over the pass where you came some time ago—one was Count Gleichen,\* the other Mr. H. Cust, and when they got here they too asked for a bath."

We then talked of other things. The Equerry told us that he had accompanied Prince Nicholas when he had visited England, and had stayed two nights at Windsor Castle. The Equerry had pleasant recollections of his visit there. A pensive look came over his handsome face at the thought of it. "Ah, *Mademoiselle, comme on mange bien à Windsor*," he said. We mentioned the names of a few of our friends who happened to be attached to the Royal Household. The Equerry had met them and had found them charming, all but one great lady whose name I mentioned a few days later when the Equerry had come to know us a little better. He stopped short, glanced over his shoulder almost as if afraid, passed his hand over his forehead, and said, "Ah, but some of the ladies in your country would make good generals."

In the evening there was a lot of tramping about, and buckets were to be seen going upstairs; finally I was told my bath was ready for me. On the floor of my room was a tin bath of exceeding length, but so peculiarly narrow that I wondered how I should ever wedge myself into it, and if I did how I should

\* Now Major-General Lord Edward Gleichen.

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ever succeed in getting out again. I managed it somehow, and for the rest of the evening was inclined to boast about being clean, and made myself therefore most objectionable to my—as yet—unwashed relations.

It was a remarkable bath, but not until long after did I fathom the reason for its unusual appearance. I was talking to a friend whose aunt had some time before been travelling in Sicily. The aunt had taken a girl friend with her, who made a great fuss about washing, and demanded a morning tub.

“But there are no baths in Sicily,” explained the aunt. “If people want to wash, which is naturally when the weather is warm, they go down to the sea.”

However, nothing would satisfy the girl; she continued to bother the hotel-keepers and everybody else.

One morning she came down triumphant. She had had a delightful bath, and said something about always being able to get what you want if only you took enough trouble. The aunt knew Sicily well and she couldn't understand it. Quietly she went to the wife of the hotel-keeper and asked how and where the bath had been found.

“But, of course, Signora, we have a bath,” was the reply. “But most people—they prefer not—but the Signorina she insist, so we bring it. Certainly we have one bath. One must wash the dead!”

The first person the A.D.C. introduced to us was the Montenegrin Chancellor of the Exchequer, a young man quite as handsome as the A.D.C., and dressed much the same, in what we supposed was the uniform of the Montenegrin army, if there were one. Later on we found that all the men in the country wore bright-coloured clothes. Those who could afford it had red waistcoats embroidered with gold or black

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silk, and like the A.D.C. and the Chancellor, all had wide sashes, brightly coloured, in which they carried long knives with shining brass handles, mounted sometimes with green ivory.

Quite the handsomest race we had ever seen, the women were as good-looking as the men. They too wore a national dress of hand-woven material in bright colours; but, while the men wore little round caps, they wore long veils of white or black.

Men and women alike had frank, kindly faces, and walked with the proud gait of people who had always maintained their national independence and had kept free from the yoke of the Mohammedans.

Walking about also in the little town were some Albanians, though we saw none in the ballet-dancer petticoats one associates with Albania; the men we saw wore most curious tight woollen trousers, cream-coloured with black patterns. Some were striped zebra fashion, some had a corkscrew decoration of black winding round each cream-coloured leg. We were told that the different designs showed to which clan the wearer belonged. One certainly could distinguish them a good way off, which must be an advantage in a country where—like Albania—the inhabitants were constantly fighting each other and their neighbours.

After showing us round the town, the Chancellor, with many apologies, asked if he might be allowed to go up to my room, as it appeared a considerable portion of the revenues of the country was lying there. Much interested, we accompanied him and the A.D.C. upstairs, and, sure enough, after a certain amount of hunting about, an open wooden box painted bright green was produced from under my bed. There was no lock on it and it was nearly full of the money of the

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country. The people of the inn must have known it was there, yet, good honest souls that they were, not one of them had touched it.

Even under the kind auspices of the Chancellor and the A.D.C. we quickly exhausted the attractions of Niksic, and finding there was a good road, we hired a carriage to drive us to Podgorica, on our way to Cetinje and the coast. The road followed the valleys, along which flowed a river, on the banks of which the stones had been cleared away wherever possible and little fields of various crops were growing. On all sides the valleys were shut in by bare hills, where flocks of goats browsed on the sparse shrubs that grew amongst the rocks. It all looked poor and as if life were a struggle. We saw but few trees, but were told that on the Albanian side there were large forests. As there is no coal in the country—indeed there are no minerals of any kind—the people must depend on the supply of wood to keep them warm in winter, for from what we were told the climate then must be bitter, which we quite believed.

At Podgorica we found a comfortable inn and delightfully clean rooms prepared for us, but were covered with shame and confusion when we heard that a Belgian family had been turned out bag and baggage by order of the A.D.C. to make room for us. In consequence of this we did not stay at Podgorica, as we should have liked, but, giving back the rooms to the very pleasant Belgian family who were picnicking in the village until we chose to leave, we moved on to Cetinje, the capital town of Montenegro, a most amusing and interesting little place.

The then reigning Sovereign, Prince Nicholas, lived in a palace not much larger than a country house in England, with a dull German-looking garden tacked

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on at one side. He was then considered—by somebody who knew him well—to be one of the most astute princes in Europe, and it was said that as regards marrying off his daughters he could give points to any London dowager.

He at that time represented in his own princely person the Montenegrin House of Lords, the House of Commons, the Law Courts, and any other Court besides, and could be seen any day dispensing justice under a tree in the market place, a system that seemed to answer admirably, for it was both quick, cheap and impartial. We supposed that there must be a prison, but we never saw one, and in any case there cannot have been anybody inside it, for the prisoners were walking about the town, their legs linked together with heavy iron chains. They were remarkably cheerful-looking people, clanking about with their friends and smoking cigarettes in the most amiable fashion. They were most of them, we were told, murderers—that is to say, most of them had killed two or three others, but they were so merry, and looked so nice, that it must have been almost a pleasure to be dispatched by one of them. The Montenegrins, like the Bosnians, were bandits by nature and inclination, with the added advantage of having a never-ending family feud with the Albanians. A Montenegrin, assisted by his family and a few able-bodied sympathetic friends, would make a dash over the frontier into Albania, put an end to a few enemies, slit some masculine noses, and carry off as many of the women and cattle as he conveniently could. The Albanians, being not unnaturally annoyed by this, would retaliate at a favourable moment; and so the warfare would go on, first on one side and then on the other, until Prince Nicholas, realising that something must be



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done, caught and chained up as many of his subjects as he could ; though not very many, which perhaps was just as well, otherwise everything in the country would have come to a standstill.

One of the sons of Prince Nicholas was a horseman, at least as much of a horseman as anybody can be where there is nowhere to ride except up and down the two roads in the country. When we were there the Prince had lately received a present of four white Arab horses from the Sultan of Turkey, and we were invited to go and look at them. We were sorely tried. Even a Prince does not look a gift horse in the mouth, or else he would have seen, as we did, that they were no longer in the first blush of youth. My truthful sisters walked round them looking for some point that they could honestly admire, and fixed upon their tails ! They could quite truthfully do that, for the tails were ornamented with blue beads, which were threaded singly on to the hairs, which were then knotted. An original and striking decoration, we thought.

Notwithstanding my gloomy forebodings, our little trip was coming to a triumphant conclusion. We were all in robust health and, instead of being murdered, had met the whole time with nothing but the utmost kindness and hospitality. We left Cetinje, and quite successfully negotiating the hairpin bends on the road, landed at that wonderful harbour at Cattaro, and taking a steamer, once more, returned to Venice.

## CANADA

### I

1905

My Mother was greatly interested in emigration for Poor Law children, her heart went out to the poor little souls still—even now—cooped up by the hundred in this country in workhouses and other institutions. Her idea was that they should be taken out early, as children, to Canada and the other great dominions, and be brought up in the surroundings in which they were ultimately to earn their living. In fact, to be reared in the country which was to be their home. Surely a more sensible method than bringing them up in England and, later on, when they are too old to be readily adaptable to new conditions, encouraging them to go out to a totally new country.

My Mother also maintained that fresh air and good food and liberty in a healthy country environment could counteract, to a great extent, any weakness the children might have inherited. There was no question of taking out diseased children, but there were numbers who deteriorated mentally and physically herded up together in large establishments—for them she was convinced it would mean new life.

When Mother first brought out her scheme, the question of over-population and competition in the labour market was not so urgent as now; many people were extremely interested in her ideas. A young

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Mr. Kingsley Fairbridge, an Australian, took up her suggestions in a practical form, and started homes for children in Western Australia, doing excellent work there.

The principal objection raised to my Mother's scheme was on the score of cost. Some of the Guardians said it would add to the burdens of the ratepayers; my Mother, on the contrary, maintained that it would not, and to prove her words she determined to purchase a farm in Canada, take out there a certain number of poor, miserable children—wretched if you like, but not mentally or otherwise diseased, and demonstrate practically what the cost and the results would be.

That she was right was proved by the children who had the good fortune, later on, to go to her farm in New Brunswick. Of the many boys and girls who were there for varying periods there was not one failure. In fact, the improvement in them was astonishing. I have myself been with Mother to the Unions when the children were handed over, pale, wretched little mites, showing all the well-known signs of arrested development which later on would surely turn into actual disease. Five months later I have seen the same children in Canada on the farm, and have not recognised them—such is the recuperative power of our poor bodies if, when they are young, they can get plenty of good wholesome food, liberty of mind and body and the finest fresh air in the world.

The war and my Mother's death put an end to a most successful experiment, which I would give anything to see developed on a large scale, for the benefit to the children has been proved beyond doubt, and as to cost, it can be—and was—carried out at a saving in expense to the ratepayer.

Later on, when the farm was a going concern, there was a curious instance of good fortune or fate—or luck, as some people call it—amongst the children.

A well-known lady doctor had come to see my Mother in London, asking for her help in a particularly sad case. Living near the lady doctor's house in the country, she told us, were two elderly sisters, who kept a small and very select school for little boys. Amongst the small boys was one we will call Alfred. His father and mother were devoted to him and often came to see him; he spent his holidays with them, generally at Brighton, where he had a pony of his own and lived in the utmost luxury, as the newspapers say. The elderly ladies were also aware that the little boy's grandfather was a Peer, and that Alfred would one day come into the title after his father's death.

All went well until suddenly one day the firm of solicitors who paid every quarter for the boy's education wrote to say his father was dead, that his mother had died a week or two later, and that Alfred was destitute, for his grandfather had repudiated him and had refused to pay for his education.

The poor elderly ladies were in despair. They were fond of Alfred, who was a particularly good-looking, smart little boy. They and the lady doctor had kept him for a year at their own expense, beyond that they could no longer afford it, and the following week Alfred was to go into the workhouse unless Mother could come to his rescue in the meanwhile.

An exception was made, for Mother as a rule only took children direct from the Unions, and for about two years Alfred lived the life of a small Canadian boy and profited much thereby.

Then we—in London—received a letter from a well-known lady, a widow with no children of her own

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and very well off. She said she had been to see Mother's farm, had been much struck with Alfred, had heard something of his history and wanted to adopt him as her own child.

So Alfred had once more fallen on his feet, and was again to have his own pony and live in luxury. The lady came over to London some years later and called to see us. Alfred was in Canada, but she told us he was the greatest success. She said that only once did she have trouble with him. When he was about fourteen he began—so to speak—to be too big for his boots. She said she knew what was wrong with him, he wanted a good whipping! and as there was nobody to do it for her, she determined to do it herself. She thrashed Alfred till her arm ached, but after that he was all right; it brought him to his senses, she said, and now he was as happy as possible, and a great joy to her. She also told us the grandfather was reported to be "coming round" and, it was thought, would eventually acknowledge his heir.

Yet people tell you there is no such thing as fate or good luck.

With the object of buying the farm, Mother and I crossed the Atlantic in 1905 and landed at Quebec. It was the first time either of us had been in America, but I was destined to cross over there many more times during the next ten years.

Of course, we had a very busy time on arrival, getting advice, consulting officials, and so on; my Mother wishing to see as much of Canada as she could in the time at our disposal, before deciding finally on the most suitable spot for her farm. As she was rather deaf, I did her telephone work for her. In those days Canada was much in advance of England in that respect, and, to my consternation, I found myself one

day speaking to the Premier about one thousand miles away, when I thought I was talking to the manager of our hotel.

Surely there are no people more hospitable than, and few as hospitable as, Canadians. We had a delightful time at Quebec, Montreal and Ottawa, making many new friends and going to so many entertainments that I got bewildered amongst them, and looked forward to a rest in the railway train, but to couple travelling on a Canadian line with the idea of rest showed how little I knew of that country. Of course, if you are fortunate enough to have secured a drawing-room car in advance, you can shut yourself up if you so wish and bar yourself out from the rest of the travellers on the train, but Mother and I were continually getting off for a day or two on our way across Canada. We never could be sure, more than a short time in advance, on which particular day we should arrive or depart from any particular place. So never once did we "hit off" a drawing-room car when it chanced to be available, and therefore sat in the usual first-class compartments, generally crowded with passengers.

We were never dull when travelling on the C.P.R. A good many people knew what had brought us out to Canada, the ever-present newspaper men saw to that. Not content with merely sending in their cards and asking for interviews, they had even knocked at our bedroom doors. One day a stout lady came up to us in a railway car and explained that her name was Mrs. H. B. Robinson. Mother was absorbed in conversation with some other friends, so Mrs. H. B. Robinson had to content herself with talking to me. I racked my brains to think where we had met before, but could remember nothing. Mrs. Robinson herself came to my rescue.

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"I have never had the pleasure of being introduced to you or your Mother," she said, "but you know my husband's second cousin, Mr. S. J. Strong."

I was much relieved. "Yes, indeed," I said. "We have had the pleasure of meeting Mr. S. J. Strong. I remember him quite well."

"And didn't he mention his second cousin, Mr. H. B. Robinson?" inquired that gentleman's wife.

I could not honestly recall that he had.

"Never mentioned his second cousin?" asked Mrs. H. B. Robinson, greatly surprised.

I said something to the effect that perhaps my memory was at fault.

"Well," said Mrs. H. B. Robinson, somewhat appeased, "of course he spoke about his aunt, Miss Brown?"

Alas! again I was at a loss.

"Miss Sarah M. Brown, she suffers very much from indigestion," explained Mrs. Robinson.

It was dreadful. I could remember nothing about a Miss Sarah M. Brown with or without indigestion.

Mrs. Robinson looked at me almost reproachfully. "Never mind," she said, cheering up. "Now you would like to hear all about my husband, wouldn't you?"

Mrs. Robinson rummaged about in a spacious-looking bag and produced a photograph of a young man with square shoulders and a frozen smile. "There," said Mrs. H. B. Robinson with triumph. "When I married him he was twenty-three and I was forty-six, and the neighbours said, 'Say, have you adopted an orphan, and are you going to rear him?'"

For once I was completely nonplussed. At last I took refuge in safety. "Oh, my!" I said. What else was there to say?

As I remarked before, Mother and I were continually getting off the train. One day we stopped at a little town on the C.P.R. and asked for the best hotel. We were shown one close to the station, and a dirty inn we found it to be. Our bedrooms smelt of stale tobacco and the food was horrible.

Mother wished to drive out the same day to see an important Government Experimental Farm some miles out of the town, so she inquired where she could get a vehicle of some sort to take us out there, and was told that the inn-keeper would "fix us up." We found that gentleman, in company with some friends, in his shirt-sleeves and a felt hat pulled down to his nose, leaning up against the post of the little iron verandah facing the station. His hands were in his trousers pockets, and he was turning a plug of tobacco round and round in his jaws, occasionally spitting into the road.

He did not attempt to move when Mother spoke to him, but rolled a slow eye from one to the other of us.

In answer to Mother's inquiry, he asked if she wanted a knock-up, swankie rig with a dinkum horse, or words to that effect. Mother said she certainly did.

And would she drive it herself, or did she want a driver?

Somewhat nettled at his behaviour, and fearing lest he should suggest coming himself, Mother said we should much prefer to drive ourselves, and that we would be ready to start in a few minutes' time. I fancied I saw just for an instant a gleam in the inn-keeper's eye as he cast a look towards his boon companions. He drawled something to the effect that he would see about it, and we went to put on our hats.

I was just ready when I heard a noise in the road under our windows, and looking out I saw a bright



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red two-wheeled racing buggy with pneumatic tyres. In the shafts was the dinkum horse, a raking brute with four men holding on to it as it flung itself from side to side, doing everything it could think of except kick. Thank goodness, it never did that.

I drew my head in and reported to Mother. "We've got to go," she said. "Pin your hat on and keep your feet out and remember you're English."

With calculated calm we went downstairs, where the four men—looking very heated—were hanging on to the horse. Without turning a hair Mother raised her eyeglass to her eye. "Take the reins," she ordered, "and get in."

Choosing a moment when the horse was easing off a little, preparatory to another bout, I took the reins and jumped in, followed a moment later by Mother. "Right?" asked the inn-keeper, who was one of the four holding on to the horse. I put my feet well out, as Mother advised, took good hold of the reins, and "Let him go," I cried, and we were off like the wind.

The road was awful, there were holes in it in which one could not only have buried a baby, but even a child. I was afraid Mother or I or both of us would be shot clean out of the buggy, or rig, as I suppose I ought to call it.

Luckily there was very little traffic and the road was straight for the first few miles; after that, we had been told to cross the railway and keep straight on.

I hoped the pace we were going would tell on our animal, and that before long he would begin to calm down, but not a bit of it,—he was still as lively as a kitten when we came to the turn and saw the railway bridge in front of us. Horror upon horror! the inclined plane leading up to it was destitute of a fence of any sort. The bridge itself had a rail on each side,

but the road leading up to it had nothing. We got up all right, but the sound of his hoofs on the wooden floor of the bridge set our steed off again. I could not have stopped him had Niagara itself been in front of us. All I could do was just to steer him. I think we must have arrived at that experimental farm in record time—I mean in those days, before motors were as common as cabbages.

The headman came out to meet us and evidently knew the horse, for he looked at him, and then at us, and asked if we had had a pleasant drive? Of course we said yes. We would have died rather than confess we hadn't liked it.

Then Mother got down and talked land values and crops, and labour and children, for an hour; while the horse and I mutually got ready for the return journey.

When it came to Mother getting in again the horse objected strongly. The head of the farm was luckily a large and lusty person, and thanks to him Mother managed it. Once safely in, we went off again at breakneck speed, our pneumatic tyres tossing us about like footballs as we bounced into holes in the road and bounced out again.

Once over the bridge we breathed more freely, and then came the straight run up to the hotel. Before we got anywhere near we were aware that a little crowd was waiting to see how much of us remained alive. The horse pulled up at the door—assisted by me—and the men fell upon him and held him while, with what we hoped was the same impressive dignity that we had shown getting into the rig, we now got out of it. I think the inn-keeper was aware he hadn't scored *that* time, but all he said was, "My! I guess you've drove afore." It was true enough.

Another time we stayed a night at a little town on

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the main line, which I believe has now grown into a very large one, so that Mother might see the Bishop and ask his advice on some point connected with children.

We ran the Bishop to ground washing his buggy in his back yard. He told us his wife had gone out to see a friend, but he said he had finished washing up the plates after their evening meal and had cleaned the knives, so that when he had finished the buggy he would be entirely at Mother's disposal. We waited while the Bishop finished his job, which he did in a workmanlike manner, and leaving him and my Mother deep in conversation I went for a stroll down the road.

It was very quiet. The little houses each side were exactly alike; each had an untidy bit of grass in front destitute of flowers, and another bit at the back mostly decorated with garments hanging out to dry. The end of the road seemed to melt away into wheat, endless miles of it without a break, stretching as far as the eye could see.

Almost at the end of the row of houses was a woman tending a few flowers, very common ones, but flowers for all that. I leaned over the little wooden fence and wished her good afternoon.

The woman replied without a trace of an accent. So again I spoke to her, and this time I said I was sure she was English like myself, and asked how she liked Canada.

This brought her up to the rails. "How do I like this country?" she repeated, "I'd like it well enough," she said, "if it were not so terrible dull."

I was much surprised; I never expected her to say that. "You have a nice house and a nice garden and a buggy," I said, "you ought not to be dull."

"That's all right," said the woman, "but what's

the use of a buggy when there's nowhere to go with it? We're all the same here, we have the same houses, the same rigs, the same things to eat and drink. Look at that wheat out there. Our life is like that for miles and miles, always the same thing. There is no variety out here—everybody's the same and everybody's dull. I was born in England, on a big estate in the Midlands, and it was lovely there. My father was head game-keeper. There was always something for us children—a meet of the hounds, or a shooting-party, and all the ladies and gentlemen out for luncheon. Then there were entertainments—Christmas trees in the winter," and the woman's eyes brightened at the recollection of it. "Then I married and went to London," she said. "London was a wonderful place for children. There was so much for them to go and look at without costing anybody a penny. There were the ladies riding in the Row, and the changing of the Guard at St. James' Palace, and the fishing for minnows in the Serpentine, and always a gentleman to pull them out should they fall in the water, while there was the Marble Arch for the men. One's husband could talk himself hoarse there and nobody would interfere with him. A woman could always count on getting a day to herself if she wanted it in London. Here," she said, "there is only the Cinema for the young and for the old. What is the good of going out for a drive bumping in and out of ruts till your back aches, and when you get to the end nothing to do but turn round and drive back again? I don't want to go home to the old country now. I've got used to being out here, but it's dull, so dull I could often sit down and cry."

When I rejoined Mother and the Bishop they were still hard at it. The Bishop walked back with us to

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our hotel, and when he left, Mother said she felt sorry for him, for not only was his work very hard, but it sounded terribly monotonous as well. I knew he was not the only person in the town who felt like that.

Our Mother to the end of her life was a delightfully interesting companion, but to travel with her was somewhat of an anxiety; one never knew what she would do next, and it was always the unexpected that occurred with her. A wide digression proves my point.

She was over seventy at the time of the last Durbar in India, but for all that she enjoyed herself like a girl. Personally I think the entertainments given at Calcutta at that time in honour of the King and Queen were even more exhausting than those at Delhi, and when it came to the Military Tattoo at Calcutta we did our best to dissuade Mother from going to it.

She had been very late at a small dance given for the Queen at Government House, and had spent all the following day rushing about from one festivity to another. She ought properly to have been—and most probably was—very tired, but she wouldn't acknowledge it, and when it came to the night of the Tattoo she insisted on going to it, and the whole party of us—about half a dozen—got into two carriages, and off we started, taking care, however, to have Mother's native servant with us in case anything were wanted.

Anybody who tried to get to that Tattoo will have a vivid recollection of what it was like. Many thousands more people had assembled to see it than the authorities had anticipated. After a time we got tightly wedged in amongst a crowd of carriages, and it looked as if we would not be able to move for an hour or so.

The men who were with us agreed that we should see nothing if we remained where we were, so it was decided that the more agile amongst us should enter

the sort of football scrum that was heaving round us, and try to force our way through the mob to the stand for which we had been given special tickets, but as a native crowd is not by any means a joke, it was thought wiser for Mother to remain in the carriage until the block lessened and she was able to drive home; so, telling her servant he was not to leave her on any account, we dived into the crowd and left her, as we thought, in safety.

According to Mother's account she sat in the carriage for half an hour without being able to move an inch in any direction. Getting tired of waiting, and half suffocated by the mingled smell of natives and horses, she got out and, followed by her Hindoo boy, made her way towards a grass field, an open space where at any rate she was free from the crowd.

Pleased with the change, Mother walked slowly along in the warm Indian moonlight, when suddenly her feet shot away from under her, she slid down some six feet of bank and landed at the bottom up to her knees in mud and water. Always extremely short-sighted, she had fallen into an irrigation ditch, and, unhurt but somewhat shaken, had stuck fast at the bottom of it.

Without losing her presence of mind for an instant, Mother put her hat straight, and mounting her eyeglass, surveyed her surroundings. The ditch was deep, and so far as she could see extended for miles into the velvet darkness, while on the bank over her head, like a white ghost, was her boy, running backwards and forwards, wringing his hands.

"Now then, Sambo, what's the matter with you?" sang out a jolly British voice.

"My lady, she is in the watter," wailed the boy.

"Bless my boots! 'ere's a lady in the ditch. 'Ere,

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give me your 'and, Mam, and I'll pull you out," and the kind young Tommy, hardly more than a boy, stooped down and offered Mother a good hearty red paw.

"Thank you very much," said Mother from the bottom of the ditch, "but I'm afraid it will take half a dozen like you to pull me out of this mud. Are there any of your friends about who would help?"

"There's all of us 'ere one way or another; I'll call some of 'em up. You stay where you are, Mum, while I get some of my pals," said the young soldier.

A few minutes later and half a dozen young Tommies were standing in a row on the bank contemplating Mother's hat, which was about all they could see of her.

"What we want'er do," said the leader of the salvage party, "is to get three on one side of 'er, and three on the other, and 'eave 'er out."

"Don't you begin to pull until I say 'Go,'" said Mother.

"That's it, that's the ticket," remarked her first friend cheerfully. "Dig your heels in, lads, and when the lady says 'Go,' just you pull like blazes."

When the word was given Mother popped up the bank like a cork out of a bottle, so hearty was the pull they gave her. She thanked her rescuers, who strolled off quite unconcerned, as if dragging an elderly lady out of a ditch was quite an everyday occurrence. Mother, somewhat shattered, looked round for some place where she could rest a minute and, seeing not far off a thing like a glorified bandstand, she tottered towards it and sank down upon some rather steep wooden steps covered with red carpet. Her top half was light-coloured silk, and a smart white feather boa was still round her neck. Her lower half was brown mud of the frog-pond variety.

"You can't sit there, Madam," said a masculine voice above her. All Mother could see were two beautiful shiny top-boots and the end of a sword that presumably belonged to the owner of the masculine voice.

"Oh yes, I can, thank you," Mother replied politely. "It's not very comfortable here, but I don't mean to stay more than a minute or two."

"This is His Majesty's State Pavilion," continued the masculine voice in impressive tones.

"I cannot believe His Majesty contemplates sitting on these stairs," replied Mother. "In that case I feel sure the carpet would have been thicker."

"His Majesty will be walking down them very soon," said the voice in a still more lofty manner.

"I don't see a carriage and I don't suppose His Majesty contemplates walking home," replied Mother, quite unmoved.

Obviously the owner of the boots couldn't think of a suitable rejoinder to that, so he departed, and Mother, pulling herself together with the aid of her faithful but hitherto despairing boy, found her carriage, which at last was able to move towards home.

When we got back we found her sitting up in bed reading the paper. She had had a hot bath, and said that she had enjoyed her evening in her own way as much as we had enjoyed ours, and from my knowledge of her I believe it. So ends my digression to India.

It is a good story, and I believe has the merit of being true, that tells about an old Scotsman and his wife coming to London, and travelling for the first time on the underground railway. The poor old lady shut her eyes, while her husband passed the time reading the notices on the walls of the carriage. Presently the old lady clutched her husband's arm. "Jock,



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Jock," she said, "I'm going to be sick." "Sick, woman!" replied the old man in horrified tones, "you canna be sick here, it's five pounds for a spit."

That horrible and deadly unwholesome habit has almost entirely disappeared now in England, and also, I believe, in Canada, but when we first went there it was all too common.

We had been in the country only a few days when Mother and I got into a railway car and, before the train had really started, found that caged in with us was a victim to that disgusting habit. It was not a question of a single isolated spit once and again, but a succession of them, delivered with the rapidity, the noise, and the precision of a machine gun, and directed at a receptacle kindly provided for the purpose by a considerate railway company, into which the culprit took shots worthy of a professional gunman at a bull's-eye.

It was dreadful. I read a book and tried not to listen, but was quite aware that Mother, afraid of nothing and of nobody, would not only disapprove, but would probably not hesitate to say so. Feeling nervous and not at all sure what she would do, I had a look at the culprit. He was about fifty-five, a hard-bitten sort of man, not very tall, but quick and active—the right sort to have on your side in case of a row. He looked as if he were sure to have a revolver somewhere about him, and to know how to use it too. He was evidently absolutely unconscious of doing wrong as he sat there, a short-fingered red hand spread out on each black knee, rifle shots alternating in the spitting line with Lewis-gun volleys. I looked anxiously at Mother. She was showing her astonishment and disgust in an unmistakable manner, holding her ears with her hands as, with a look of supreme misery, she would glance at the culprit.

He paid not the slightest attention. Then she coughed, gently at first and then louder. Again with no success. Then, to my horror, she spoke to him.

"Sir," she said in a clear, penetrating voice, that made him jump when he found out whom she was addressing. "Sir," she repeated, "it is a matter of perfect indifference to me if you choose so to lacerate your lungs that in a very short time your relations will be attending your funeral, but I do most strongly object to you disseminating disease amongst the unfortunate people forced to travel with you in this car."

I trembled. I quite expected the next moment the man would pull out a gun and shoot her, but not a bit of it.

"My, Marm!" he said in utter astonishment, and came across the car and sat down next to her. "My!" he repeated, "what were you saying, Marm?"

Perfectly politely Mother repeated her remark, which was received with unbounded interest and concentrated attention. Much encouraged, Mother—always graphic in her descriptions—this time excelled herself; she enlarged on her theme.

"Lungs, microbes—bugs, you know," said Mother, putting it into American for fear she should not be perfectly understood. She gave the most awful description of what went on inside one's body. The man's eyes nearly came out of his head, and even I had cold shivers down my back.

Just then another man at the other end of the car began a machine-gun exhibition, upon which the first one, with the ardour of a true convert, bounced up, went straight for him, seized him as it were by the scruff of the neck, and dragged him to Mother's side, who thereupon had to begin the whole story all over again.

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Let me say that the effect was electric, instantaneous, the greatest success. Instead of being angry, the men were delighted with Mother and she with them. When their feelings and old habits—we will put it that way—became too much for them, they disappeared at the end of the car, and only returned when they could “behave themselves,” as Mother described it.

Never was there a better behaved car-load of passengers. Mother’s first convert was on the alert at the sound of the slightest cough; anything further brought him to the spot. If the unfortunate person in his clutches ventured to object, the convert would remind him it was for his own good, accompanied by a look that effectually put an end to further discussion.

Number one convert (we will call him Mr. Brown) never left us. He sat with us all day and at every meal, which, I must say, the others did also, sticking to us like barnacles to a ship, in defiance of Mr. Brown, who was apt to be a little jealous, and didn’t care much about their “hanging around” after they had once been converted.

Mr. Brown was a millionaire, and told us he lived at Nome, the most northerly city in the world, for it is in Alaska and inside the Arctic Circle, where the ground is always frozen solid at three feet below the surface both in winter and summer. Mr. Brown spoke enthusiastically about his native town; there were more drinking saloons and chapels in it, he said, than in any other town of its size in the United States. It was too far north for trees, only tundra, wild swamp-land, for miles and miles, but Mr. Brown told us Nome possessed one unique curiosity, a greenhouse, in which for two or three months in the year lettuces grew below and cucumbers above. Lettuce could be bought when in season at a dollar an ounce, but you had to

wait for the cucumbers until a notice was put in the paper. Then you were invited to call, and on payment of three dollars attach your visiting-card to a cucumber flower. Later on you were advised when it was ready, and you went and cut your own cucumber, a wizened little thing, I expect, only a few inches long—but a cucumber for all that.

Mr. Brown had been on business to New York, and was taking a present back to his wife, who had remained at home looking after the office and the dozens of clerks in it while Mr. Brown was away. Mr. Brown was most anxious we should see his gift; he went off to get it, and returned with what looked like a small bath sponge, about the size of the palm of my hand, dull yellow in colour, and pitted with tiny holes, while, embedded in it, like a plum in a bun, was a very large and most beautiful diamond.

"There," said Mr. Brown, "do you know what that is? It's the biggest gold nugget found on the Yukon last fall, and that," and he poked the diamond, "is the largest stone I could find in Noo York. You see," said Mr. Brown, "I have had it mounted as a brooch, so that my wife can wear it pinned on to her dress," and he showed us a thing at the back so large and strong it looked something between a skewer and a dagger. "It's heavy," said Mr. Brown warningly, as he handed the brooch to me, and so heavy it was that I nearly dropped it on to the floor, and wondered if Mrs. Brown wore tarpaulin clothes, for nothing else would stand the weight of it.

"I used to carry it about with me at first, but it wore out my pockets; it slipped down into my trousers once," continued Mr. Brown, who was a homely person, "and those diamonds are so scratchy. Did you ever see another brooch like it?" he asked us anxiously.

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We said we had never seen anything like it.

"I don't think there are many," said Mr. Brown with some pride.

With perfect honesty and truth, we assured him we were convinced there was not another like it in the world. It was absolutely unique.

As the time drew near for us to part, Mr. Brown was touchingly distressed. He begged us to come straight along with him then and there to Nome. When we refused and explained why it was impossible, he tried to make us promise to come out the following year, and bring the whole family with us. He would make our fortunes, he said, every one of us. In the kindness of his heart he also told me, in confidence, that he numbered amongst his friends several bachelors of unimpeachable character and large banking accounts. He gave me to understand that I had only got to run my eye over the whole lot of them and choose, while, if the selected one showed any reluctance at being—so to speak—hailed to the altar, he would have to reckon with him—he, Mr. Brown—who would not be prepared to stand any nonsense in the matter.

I felt it was a unique opportunity which would never occur again, and indeed it never has.

"While if there is any young man at home you've got in your mind," suggested Mr. Brown, "send him out to me; I'll make his fortune for him, no fear—tell him to come to Nome, I'll look after him."

I am quite sure Mr. Brown meant every word he said; his heart, like his nugget, was pure gold.

Curiously enough, some years later I heard again of Mr. Brown. I had been travelling in China and Japan, and was going to cross from Chemulpo, in Korea, to Port Arthur. At Chemulpo the sea is so shallow that the English steamer had to stand out a

long way from the shore. To get to her we had first to go in a sampan, a Chinese row-boat, then change from the sampan into a Chinese junk. It was pretty rough, and the sampan bobbed about in a most lively manner, while the junk was far from steady. I took a flying leap from one to the other, assisted by two Chinese sailors, and the next minute had shot through the small opening that led into the black hole that represented the junk's cabin. It was quite dark, and I landed heavily on something soft that groaned. I apologised. Somebody replied with a strong American accent. I could see nothing, and sat huddled up on the floor while the junk flopped and grunted her way out to the steamer. The American and I continued our conversation. He told me he came from Nome, and he turned out to be a cousin of Mr. Brown! When we found it out I think he was as surprised as I was. Perhaps he was one of the bachelors!

## II

Calgary, I hear, is now a fine town with smart hotels and theatres and every so-called "modern improvement." In the days when I was there it was very rough. For side-walks there were a few planks, and if one fell off them—and one generally did, for they were very slippery—one fell into five inches of dust or mud according to the state of the weather.

Mother wished to look at some land on the Porcupine hills—they are really foothills of the Rocky Mountains, and lie south of Calgary—so we hired a buggy to take us there. This time it had four wheels and a nice pair of quiet horses, and a thin young man with rather long hair to drive us. We had a couple of

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hundred miles to go, and were prepared to spend nearly a week on the road.

We started off all right, but after the first fifteen or twenty miles we had a disagreement with our driver. Mother and I had, with the help of our map, drawn up a little plan of exactly where, and which way, we meant to go. Our driver, it appeared, had done the same.

"Look here," said Mother, poking him in the back with her walking-stick; we sat behind and the driver was in front. "I want to go along the hills due south, and you are taking us away from them into the prairie."

"Yer wanter to go to McLeod, don't yer?" inquired the driver slowly, pulling up his horses and addressing Mother.

"Yes," she said.

"Then I guess we'll go round by Vincent's," he remarked, starting off again.

"I don't want to go to Vincent's," said Mother, again poking him in the ribs.

He pulled up once more, and slowly turned his eyes round at Mother without saying a word.

"Do you understand?" said Mother, waving the map. "I want to go that way, due south, and you are taking me due east. I want to look at the land along the foothills, and you are taking me right out into the plain."

The driver stared at Mother as if she were a fractious child, and waited patiently till she had finished; then he gathered up his reins again. "I guess we'll go round by Vincent's," he said.

To say that Mother was annoyed hardly describes the state she was in. She speculated, as she saw herself being taken further and further in the wrong direction,

as to whether the driver was insane, or merely suffering from liver ; she thought most likely the latter, to which she attributed his dejected appearance and frequent groans. Mother had always a practical turn of mind. I had also drawn my own conclusions, which were not the same as Mother's, but I said nothing. What made me anxious was the total disregard shown by our coachman of the awful pits we frequently only escaped falling into by a few inches. There was no road, we went straight across country, and the ground was fearfully cut up by old buffalo wallows and porcupine holes, which the horses, not our driver, avoided ; he seemed to be in a brown study, dead to everything.

At last, when we had only just missed a particularly deep, unpleasant hole, I drew the driver's attention to it. He pulled up and stared at it calmly.

"My!" he said. "If we'd got in there we should be there yet."

There were just a few wire fences in those days, and a horrid bore they were ; we had to make such long detours to get round them ; but on the whole it was a delightful drive. It was early autumn, the sun just pleasantly warm, with just enough gentle wind to bend the silvery grass till it rippled like the waves of the sea.

About midday our driver informed us we were getting near Vincent's. In the distance we saw a big mob of horses ; getting nearer, we saw three people branding foals, a horrid and painful sight. The mares were herded together in a yard surrounded by stout rails which they could neither jump nor push down. The foals were in a separate place. A couple of men would seize one of them at a time and hold it down on the ground, while a woman with a red-hot brand in her hand, heated in a portable stove, strode



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up and planted the iron on the quivering flank of the little foal. A scream from the poor little beast, another from its distracted mother, a sickening smell of burnt flesh and hair, and the foal was returned to the mare, and the same performance repeated on another.

The men and the woman were too busy to notice us, so after our driver had taken a good look at them, he drove us to the homestead, which lay a little further off.

Vincent's ranch was one of the largest in the country. He owned two, the other many miles away. He numbered his horses by the thousand—thirty thousand, we were told—and his land was calculated by the square mile.

Vincent had come out to Canada as a young man. His real name is an honoured one in English literature, and he numbered among his relations one of the most famous schoolmasters we have ever had. Knowing this, we expected to find a smart farm-house, and wished we had put on tidier clothes.

We arrived at a long low hut, in the centre of which was a small door. At the back was an untidy, tumble-down place we took to be the stable, and that was all. There was not a soul about the place, not a tree, not a bit of garden—nothing. The only sign of life was a hen and chickens scratching for treasures among the stuffing of a dilapidated sofa with only three legs, which was lying outside, propped up against the wall of the hut.

Why did our driver want so much to come to this uninviting spot? What could be the reason?

We pulled up in front of the only door, our driver telling us to go in, while he took the horses out and put them in the stable.

We had some hesitation about walking straight into

the house, but luckily an elderly woman appeared at the door. I took her to be at least sixty. She did not seem the least surprised at seeing us, but most kindly at once asked us to come in. While she and Mother talked, I looked round with much interest. A big black cooking-stove took up most of the room. At the end furthest from the door was a bed, on which Mother sat when invited by Mrs. Vincent to take a seat, while I squeezed myself between a rough table and the side of the hut, sitting bolt upright with my back to the wall on a narrow uncomfortable plank. What a dreary place to live in, and how poverty-stricken, one would have thought, had one not known to the contrary!

"For twenty years I've cooked and washed for eleven men, sometimes more," Mrs. Vincent was saying, tears streaming down her worn cheeks and dripping on to the chunks of meat and potatoes she was cooking for us in a frying-pan. "How old do you think I am?" she asked Mother.

With due consideration for her feelings, Mother said ten years less than she thought, and suggested fifty-three.

"I'm forty-eight," said poor Mrs. Vincent, "and when my husband gives up I'm going to live in an hotel, where I shall never again set eyes on a saucepan or a washtub."

The next person to come in was our driver. He took his hat off and squeezed himself between the wall and the table, sitting down by me. Mrs. Vincent recognised his presence by nodding to him and waving the fork with which she was turning over our luncheon in the frying-pan, but not for one moment did she stop talking to Mother on the bed. She was telling her about her children, and had just got to the youngest,

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when someone stood in the doorway between us and the bright sunshine outside.

"That's her," said Mrs. Vincent, indicating the door with her fork, and in stepped one of the most enchanting girls I have ever seen. About seventeen years old, she was a dream of beauty. An oval face with the most lovely brown eyes and long dark eyelashes. I couldn't take my eyes off her. She was dressed in a pair of men's breeches, patched all over, with a well-worn pair of high boots, almost as old as the breeches. A coat that had once been black and now was a dirty green, and a hat of which the brim had almost parted company from the crown completed the picture. A respectable scarecrow would have scorned her entire wardrobe, and through it all her beauty shone like a star.

Now I understood why our driver insisted on coming round by Vincent's ranch.

The lovely one nodded to our driver, whom she addressed as Sam. She took a revolver out of her pocket, placed it on the table, and stared at Mother and me.

The tender passion which I now was sure animated the heart of our driver did not seem to interfere with his appetite. He glanced at the girl, and went on eating his plateful of greasy meat and potatoes, finished his cup of tea, wiped his mouth on the back of his hand, pushed his plate and empty cup into the centre of the table and stretched his legs out under it.

"Waal! have you heard the noos about Luke Murphy?" he drawled in a slow voice.

He evidently had something very important to say. The lovely girl was obviously interested, while her Mother dried her tears on her apron and sat on the bed beside Mother, much thrilled.

No, they had not heard the "noos about Luke Murphy."

"You mind Jeff Andrews wot got gored when he was rounding up steers?" inquired Sam.

"Yes," both Mrs. and Miss Vincent had heard about that.

"He left a sorrowin' widder and five small kids unprovided for," said Sam. From his manner we gathered there was a joke somewhere, but where we could not imagine.

"I reckon we were tickled to death," continued Sam, "for Luke took the hat round for the broken-hearted widder and the five fatherless kids. I guess he collected one hundred and thirty dollars for the deservin' poor. And on the way home he turned into Wilson's Downfall, and my! he blued the whole darned show."

That was the joke. It was the greatest success. The girl was delighted, her mother laughed until she nearly wept a second time, while Sam spat on the floor and was content.

Before we left the girl showed us her horses. She always broke in her own, and her favourite amusement, she told us, was galloping after coyotes—the prairie wild dogs—and shooting them with a revolver when going at full speed.

I wonder what became of that lovely creature! I never heard of her again.

### III

As I said before, we were going due south of Calgary, and the idea was that we should drive as far as a place called McLeod and pick up the train there. Sam could not go so far with us, so we took on another

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driver, and Sam and his team went back, calling, I expect, at Vincent's Ranch on his way.

The new man was a curious mixture. Very intelligent, he had picked up a few good scientific books, which he discussed with Mother. He was deeply interested in astronomy, and the influence of the moon upon the tides, and so forth. Unlikely subjects, one would think, for a young man who had lived all his life on a ranch and had only once set eyes on the sea. He had evidently thought deeply, and was original in his ideas. It seems to me that for real originality one has to get close to nature. One does find people in towns who think for themselves, but as a rule they are country-bred folk, who happen by accident, as it were, to be living in a city. In towns, I think, the tendency is to become alike, and anybody striking out a new line is looked upon as eccentric, and snubbed accordingly.

This young man was putting question after question to Mother, eagerly asking for information, telling her what he thought and asking if she agreed. Think of the young men who have had all the advantages of a superior education, and look at the kind of literature one can see them reading any day in a third-class railway carriage in England!

On the last day of our drive our coachman looked grave. He told us a man had warned him that a number of Indians had left their reservation and were encamped somewhere between where we were and McLeod, our destination; that some dishonest traders had sold them fire-water and that they were in a very excited state.

Of course it is strictly against the law for a trader to sell spirits to Indians, and the penalty, if caught, is very severe. The profit is enormous and the tempta-

tion therefore is great. The Redskins will sell their souls for whisky. It makes them go absolutely mad, hence the danger, and our driver announced that he did not like it at all.

At lunch time we fed the horses and held a council of war. There was nobody to ask, not a house or person to be seen, and we came to the conclusion, judging from the map, from our driver's knowledge of the country, and from the state of the river, that if the Indians were out they would most likely be camped close to the one bridge which lay between us and McLeod. We decided that our best plan was not to attempt to cross the bridge until after eleven o'clock at night; by that time the moon would be well up and we could see our way. Also, if the Indians were there then, their horses would be feeding some distance from the camp, so that they would not catch them again in time to ride after us. If they were drinking, we hoped that by then the whisky would have got into their heads, and haply into their legs as well; or they might all be in a drunken sleep, and we might be able to slip past them without being discovered at all.

How we wished we had Miss Vincent and her revolver with us! Our only weapon was the heavy, lead-handled whip belonging to our driver, who announced his intention of using it to bash out the brains of the first Indian who tried to catch hold of his horses.

Reared on Fenimore Cooper, I was almost sick with excitement and fear, and our driver's remarks, of course, made me feel ten times worse. Even Mother, who I don't believe knew what fear meant, didn't seem quite happy.

All the afternoon and evening we nursed the horses

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carefully, and they were full of "buck" when the exciting moment arrived.

It was nearly midnight when we drove over the crest of a low hill and the river valley lay before us. There was not a sound—dead quiet everywhere. The moon shone brilliantly, and the river gleamed between the willow trees on its banks. About a mile away was the bridge, long and low and black; but between us and it, on the low flat ground between the foot of the hill we were on and the river, we could see an Indian camp. It looked deserted, only a little smoke curled up here and there from the nearly dead fires. There were no signs of horses so far as we could see—no sign of life anywhere.

Of course there was no road, but a rough sort of track led towards the bridge. The ground was clear, only short grass—nothing to upset the buggy if we had to gallop for it; besides, luckily, it is quite a hard job to upset a real American rig, unless you try to turn quickly, and you won't do that twice.

The driver sat in the front of the buggy, Mother and I at the back, with our luggage under our feet. The horses made hardly any sound on the soft turf as they took us down the hill; we got safely on to the flat, and our driver then put the horses into a sharp trot and made straight for the bridge. Just as we got almost level with the Indian camp, about a hundred yards away on our left, a dog barked, then another, then the whole pack. Our man whipped up the horses; they galloped furiously. Out of the tents poured the Indians, howling and running to try to head us off. The buggy bounded about. Mother and I hung on for dear life, while our suit-cases bumped about under our feet and nearly knocked us out. The din was fearful. The Indians, the dogs,

our driver standing up and thrashing the horses, and the bumping of the buggy.

It only lasted a few minutes, but it felt like hours, and never was I more thankful than when I heard the clatter of the wooden boards of the bridge under our horses' feet.

The Indians did not follow us over the bridge; unable to cut us off before we reached it, they knew they would never catch us afterwards without their horses, so they gave it up.

I know my hair stood on end for hours after. I was only too thankful to feel it was still on my head. We drove straight to the station, and finding a train due to come in very shortly, and our time being limited, we left again at once, so I never heard anything more about those Indians, but I thought about them "some," as the Americans say.

Only once did I see a prairie fire in Canada. The train stopped in the middle of the night, and, wondering what had happened, I looked out of the window. There was no moon, and the fire extended for miles: as far as I could see across the flat plain. It was a horribly fascinating sight. The flames licked up into the air gloriously red and gold, then died out, only to break out again in a different place.

One could see the dark figures of the men beating down the flames with branches, and sending millions of sparks dancing into the air. I did not notice much smoke, but it must have been in clouds, for our railway-carriage became full of it and it made us choke. I would have liked to get out of the train and help the workers, it looked so exciting, and, of course, that is just what it is, but our train moved on, carrying us away with it. That is the tiresome part of trains, one so often catches a glimpse of something interesting, some-



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thing even exciting, and lo! one is wafted away before one has a chance of knowing what happened.

Canada used to be a lonely place for women. I expect it is better now, but when we went there first we used to be told constantly how a woman, from some accident or other, had been left alone in a house many miles from any other, sometimes in the middle of winter, and when at last help had come it was too late and the woman had become a raving lunatic. My dear friend, Miss S. Macnaughton, who died, alas! during the war, wrote a story about a case which came to her knowledge. There were many such in the days when the West was first opened up for settlers.

There used to be more variety in the types of settlers in the old days, I think, than there is now. There were more of what we call "characters" amongst them. I know a family out there, very well-to-do, where the old father said a long extempore prayer before each meal. His family took me for a picnic on one of the beautiful lakes in the district. We were a large party. The young man sitting next to me drew my attention to a young lady sitting at the other end of the boat.

"See that Society Miss," he said, "in the blue shirt waist? Peachy little girl, ain't she now?"

I quite agreed, and remarked on the good looks of the young man sitting next to her, and asked what was his profession.

"Why, that's Bert," was the reply. "He pulls teeth," and he was such a *very* good-looking young man!

The children, too, were a constant source of amusement. One day Mother and I were lunching in a wonderfully managed hotel in Montreal. A father with three little children came in and took their places at a table close to us. The children were tiny. At a

guess I suppose the eldest was six, the youngest a mere baby. They sat on cushions to make them taller, and were lifted on to their chairs—at least the two younger ones were, the eldest scrambled up by himself—and they all had dinner napkins tied round their necks by the waiters.

At this point the father was called away, and I wondered what would happen. The eldest child took charge. He turned to the waiter.

"I guess you will read us the mun-u," he said; "we can't read."

The "mun-u," as he pronounced it, was read aloud, from the *hors d'œuvre* at the beginning to the dessert at the end. The three listened with grave attention; then the eldest announced he would have beefsteak, the second ordered clams; I forget what the baby had, but the waiter wrote down the orders and departed to fulfil them. Good gracious! beefsteak and clams for infants of that age!

When the food came the eldest surveyed his beefsteak.

"Waiter," he said, "I guess you'll cut that up; we aren't allowed to touch knives."

He watched the cutting-up process with critical attention, his spoon in one hand and his fork in the other. When the waiter had cut up the beef, as he thought, sufficiently small, he placed the plate in front of the little boy, who indignantly pointed with his spoon to the lumps of meat.

"Say," he said, "you'll just cut that up smaller, my mouth ain't a slit in a door!"

One of the most delightful parts of Canada, to my thinking, is Nova Scotia—not for grandeur of scenery, perhaps, but for charm of valleys and hills, lakes and rivers. Never have I seen fruit trees like those in the

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Annapolis Valley. In the autumn when we were there the trees growing in the hedges were loaded with apples of every variety, and the only anxiety of the farmers was that the weight of the fruit should not break the branches of the trees.

From Nova Scotia we crossed over to New Brunswick by boat. The Bay of Fundy is renowned for having the highest tides in the world. I remember learning painfully in my childhood that the moon has great influence on tides, but why the moon should particularly affect the Bay of Fundy is more than some of us can understand. Lunatics and lovers are generally supposed also to be affected by the moon, so it would be interesting to know if there are many lunatic asylums in that part, and if the marriage rate is conspicuously higher than elsewhere. If it is, what a chance for those of our friends who seemed to have "missed the 'bus" over here! I can imagine a subscription list being opened in some families—well supported, too—for the purpose of sending out relations no longer in the first blush of youth, the sort "you would be looking at a long time before you would be thinking of a spring chicken," as the Irishman said. What a godsend the Bay of Fundy might be for them! Fancy a spot where people enjoyed walking about arm in arm and addressed each other as "my angel" whatever they looked like elsewhere!

That part of Canada would be well populated, too, for, of course, the moon-struck lovers would never leave again; the influence of the moon on them—as on the tides—might be purely local, at any rate it wouldn't do to risk it.

Unfortunately I never had the chance of putting any of these interesting questions to a personal test, but I do remember thinking the people were mad

when, for the first time, I saw a boat thirty feet up in the air on the top of a cliff. Then I saw more boats, all equally high up. The effect was most queer. Walking below you felt as if you were in a street with the boats on the roofs of the houses, for the cliffs were quite as steep, and as there was no prohibition there or anywhere else in those days, some visitors must have felt as if they had had whisky for tea.

Of course a tide that rises and falls thirty feet twice in twenty-four hours is an extraordinary sight, and people go many miles to see the bore in the St. John River, where the tide rushing up meets the great river coming down and banks it up, but unfortunately we had no time to spare to go to see it ourselves.

Fascinating, too, it must be to hunt in the pools left by such a tide—all sorts of curious things must be left behind, queer fish and so on.

In a small way I remember the fun we used to have at a house my Uncle had at one time close to the mouth of a Welsh river. Amongst other fish a salmon was once discovered stranded in a small pool when the tide went out, and after a desperate chase, in which the whole family assisted and were one and all soaked to the skin, the salmon was caught, killed and finally eaten.

In connection with that salmon there is a story told how one of the daughters, suffering from a slight headache, went out for a walk alone one Sunday morning, instead of going to church with her family. Exceedingly good-looking but painfully short-sighted, Winnie walked slowly along the river side; the tide was out and the little pools amongst the rocks shone brightly in the spring sunshine. As she strolled along, Winnie perceived a considerable amount of splashing going on in one of the smaller pools. "Another

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salmon," she said to herself. What if she could secure this one all by herself! think what admiration and envy the rest of the family would feel! Winnie was greatly excited. She put down her parasol, which fortunately had a hooked handle, she grasped the end of it in one hand, and with the other she mounted her eyeglass. Quickly she climbed over the rocks. There was the pool, and there was the salmon trying to hide itself amongst the seaweed. She lunged at it with the crook of her parasol—it was the coachman bathing!

Why the Bay of Fundy particularly impressed itself on me, apart from its tides, was the fact that Mother and I had to starve there for twenty-one hours, whilst all the time, so to speak, in the midst of plenty.

From four o'clock one afternoon, when we had had a light tea, until one o'clock the following day, we had been unable to get a morsel of food.

We arrived at our hotel after the evening meal had been served one Saturday. Even a modest request for a plate of bread and butter was refused us. It appeared that the "young ladies" who controlled that department had "locked up" and gone, and we were told sternly that it was our own fault; we ought to have arranged to arrive "on time."

The following morning, Sunday, breakfast was an hour later than usual, so we missed it, as we had to catch our train. There was no food to be had at the station, nor on the train. Luckily we arrived at our destination in time for the midday meal, or we might have missed that also.

Neither Mother nor I felt, or were, any the worse for our fast, but it seems incredible that such a thing could happen amongst civilised people.

## SWEDEN

### I

THE winter of 1907-8 was an anxious time for me : my Father was taken dangerously ill and my Mother was very far from well. However, they survived between them the active ministrations of eight doctors and surgeons, which speaks volumes for the excellence of their constitutions, and by the summer my Father was almost his old self again, whilst my Mother was sufficiently restored to health to be able to go to Sweden, where it was thought a course of massage would do her good.

As so often happens, when both my parents were better I began to feel the effects of the strain I had been through, and it was settled that I was to be given a holiday. For the first time in my life I was to be separated from my family for more than a month, for it was decided that I should go with a friend to China and Japan via Siberia, but I was first to take my parents to Sweden, and to see them safely there before I proceeded to Russia en route for the Far East.

Socrates is reported to have said that he regretted two things in his life—one having married when he might have remained single, the other having gone by sea when he might have gone by land. I have had no experience of the joys or otherwise of the married state, but I make a point of going by land whenever possible, and one regret of my life is that so much

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of this globe should be under water. As my Mother to the end of her life was a bad sailor, it was decided that we should go by the overland route to Sweden, so in due time we arrived at Calais, and as invalids must never be kept waiting for their food, I armed myself with three vouchers for the "first service" in the refreshment-car and, followed closely by my Father and Mother, presented the vouchers to the *maître d'hôtel*, who showed us three vacant seats at a table and told us to sit down.

The fourth seat was occupied by an odd-looking man. He was not very tall, but was remarkably square in the shoulders, and with a most peculiar nose of the variety called pug, but "of a pug" as the French say. It looked as if it had been flattened out not only once, but several times. This person seemed to resent our being put at his table.

"A moi, mong table. Comprenez?" he said, looking fiercely at the *maître d'hôtel*.

"Parbleu! One person does not require the seats of four," replied that personage. "Mettez-vous là, mesdames," he repeated to us.

The owner of the pug nose was indignant; he rose to his feet, a matter of some difficulty, for, as everyone knows, there is but little room in a restaurant-car and the stranger was large. "Por moi, por my friends. Just you leave my table alone, hands off—comprenez?" He thumped the table and looked thunder at the *maître d'hôtel*.

"Nom d'un chien! est-ce qu'il est fou, cet homme-là?" demanded that outraged despot, edging so as to get the table well between him and the pug-nosed one. Feeling tolerably safe, he began again, "Your friends—they come not, they are not here, you sit on four chairs at one time—c'est impossible—voyons."

"And what's that got to do with you, you cow!" shouted the stranger.

That roused the *maître d'hôtel* to fury. He turned purple in the face, and shrieked something about having the pug-nosed one turned out of the car.

"Oh, you will, will you? That's it, is it?" replied the other with dangerous calm, turning up his cuffs and at the same time edging out of his place.

The *maître d'hôtel*, accustomed to bully others with impunity, was, of course, a coward at heart; with terror he saw the signs of a coming battle.

"Prenez vos places," he said to us, and pretending he was wanted at the other end of the car, he fled and basely left us to our fate.

Glancing round, I realised that all the other seats had been taken; there was nothing for it but to sit down beside the pug-nosed one, who was muttering strange oaths and shaking his fist in the direction of the departed *maître d'hôtel*.

"You will allow us to sit here until your friends come?" I said, with my most ingratiating smile, as we took our places.

The pug-nosed one eyed me in what I fancied was a not unfriendly manner, as he mopped his head with a large and loud silk handkerchief.

"My Mother has been ill," I explained rather hurriedly, "and—and she is tired and hungry," I added, anxious to keep the peace.

The stranger ran a remarkably shrewd pair of eyes over my parents.

"That Poppa?" he inquired, indicating my Father with his thumb.

My Father had pushed his spectacles up on to his forehead, and was scanning the wine card with short-sighted eyes.



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I assured the stranger that was "Poppa."

"And Momma's been ill?" repeated our new and very odd acquaintance. "Where's that—that dog in the dirty livery?" he asked violently, picking up the wine card which Father had put down. "Here, you—venez ici, bring a bottle of that"—pointing out what he wanted with a short thick finger and scowling at the *mâitre d'hôtel*. "Yes, a bottle of Cordong rouge, and look sharp about it!"

The *mâitre d'hôtel*, realising that I was firmly entrenched between him and the stranger should another battle begin, became quite polite when told to bring a bottle of the finest and most expensive champagne the train provided; he fetched it in record time.

"Now, give Momma a glass of that," said the surprising stranger.

I thanked him as Mother was handed a foaming glass.

"Why aren't you taking any yourself?" he asked suspiciously.

I am not particularly fond of champagne at any time, but under the circumstances I was prepared to drink almost anything.

"You didn't ask me to have any, you know," I replied, filling my glass.

A slow smile passed over the stranger's face as he winked the eye nearest me.

"My dear," said my horrified Father, sitting opposite me. "What are you doing, drinking that—that gentleman's wine?"

"It's all right, Father," I replied. "The gentleman told me to," and at the same time I kicked him quietly under the table.

Father was dreadfully slow in the uptake. Instead of taking the hint, he looked under the table, and finding nothing, began again.

"It's very kind, I'm sure, but we can't possibly——"

"Do you mean to say, sir——?" inquired the stranger, beginning to flare up.

"Never mind Father," I said soothingly, "he's rather deaf. Look at Mother, she's a different person—your champagne, it's done her worlds of good."

Only half convinced, the pug-nosed one did look at Mother, who smiled at him and thanked him as far as the noise and bumping of the train would allow; she had grasped the position, while Father, for all my kicks, had not.

"She's handsome, is Momma," said the stranger, gazing at her. "I like 'em with white hair," he added, as if we were discussing the points of a horse.

"And it's all her own," I said, thankful to have found a peaceful topic of conversation.

"I can see that," said my neighbour; "you can't take me in, no flies on me," he said.

It was a very exhausting conversation. I found it so difficult to think of safe topics, besides I had to keep Father quiet.

It was the stranger himself who asked me suddenly what animal I thought he resembled.

I replied at once, "A bull-dog," and then regretted what I had said; my neighbour had such a very uncertain temper.

Luckily he didn't mind at all; he seemed, on the contrary, to be delighted. He hunted about in various pockets and produced a photograph, apparently taken at the seaside, for it depicted his own head and that of a very large bull-dog taken side by side looking over a wall.

"There we are, my dawg and me, and my friends ask which is the dawg," he said, and really they were almost alike.

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Who or what the stranger was we never made out. Father said afterwards he thought he was an extremely shady bookmaker, but I think Father was prejudiced. Mother, inspired by the champagne, thought he was a South American millionaire, while I thought, from the look of his nose, that he must be a prize-fighter, but as I had never seen one, my opinion was perhaps of not much value. At any rate, he told me he owned a house in a quarter I knew to be the smartest and most expensive in Paris, and seemed devoted to his wife, whom he described as, and who probably was, a very pretty woman.

We had a pleasant and perfectly peaceful luncheon until it came to paying the bill. Again it was the *maître d'hôtel* who made out Father's account and handed it—quite rightly—to him.

"A moi, give that to me," demanded the stranger.

"Excuse me," said Father, clutching his bill with one hand, while with the other he fumbled in his pocket for change. He had given in about the champagne, but about the bill he meant to be firm.

"Donnez-moi that bill," roared the stranger, glaring at the *maître d'hôtel*.

"Do we all want to be murdered?" demanded that functionary with considerable feeling, and snatching the bill out of Father's hand he pushed it over to the pug-nosed one, who, in return, handed over a five-hundred-franc note.

Father was too cross to be very polite, but I think Mother and I made up for it, for when we shook hands and said good-bye to the stranger the last thing he said was, "After all, I am glad my friends did not turn up."

## II

I never imagined that any place in Sweden could be as dull as the Massage Establishment turned out to be when once we had arrived there. It stood on the edge of a lake, so large that it was like a small sea, and there were cornfields right up to the edge of the water. There were no animals, no birds, hardly a butterfly. Even the water was dull, for it never changed colour, it was for ever the same cold grey. There were no fish in the lake, or at least so few that nobody took the trouble to try to catch them. The one and only excitement was the arrival of the little local steamer. We could see it ages before it arrived, a black speck on the expanse of water. With a lot of puffing and blowing of whistles it would draw up at the tiny landing-stage, where two small boys and one man would meet it. With a great deal of fuss a packet of letters and newspapers, mostly addressed to us, an old woman and some chickens would be landed, and with more blowing of whistles the little steamer would depart again and the excitement of the day was over.

The one redeeming feature of the month I spent there was Miss Rhoda Broughton, who was as amusing and delightful a companion as her books would lead one to expect. She brought with her her elderly lady's maid, an excellent person who had been brought up in the way she should go and had never strayed off it, not by half an inch. This admirable female and my Mother's maid became great friends, but after a day or two at the Clinique they complained that though there were baths provided for the guests, there was nothing of the sort available for the maids. However, it was explained that there was a bath-house in the

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village where, on the payment of a small fee, an excellent bath could be had at any time.

So the two lady's maids went off as directed, but came back hot with indignation, their feelings so outraged that they were almost speechless. It appeared that everything had been all right until the maids discovered that the old women in charge of the bath-house were in the habit of scrubbing the bathers. The maids explained that they preferred to wash themselves.

"But it is the custom of the country that we should wash you," said the old women.

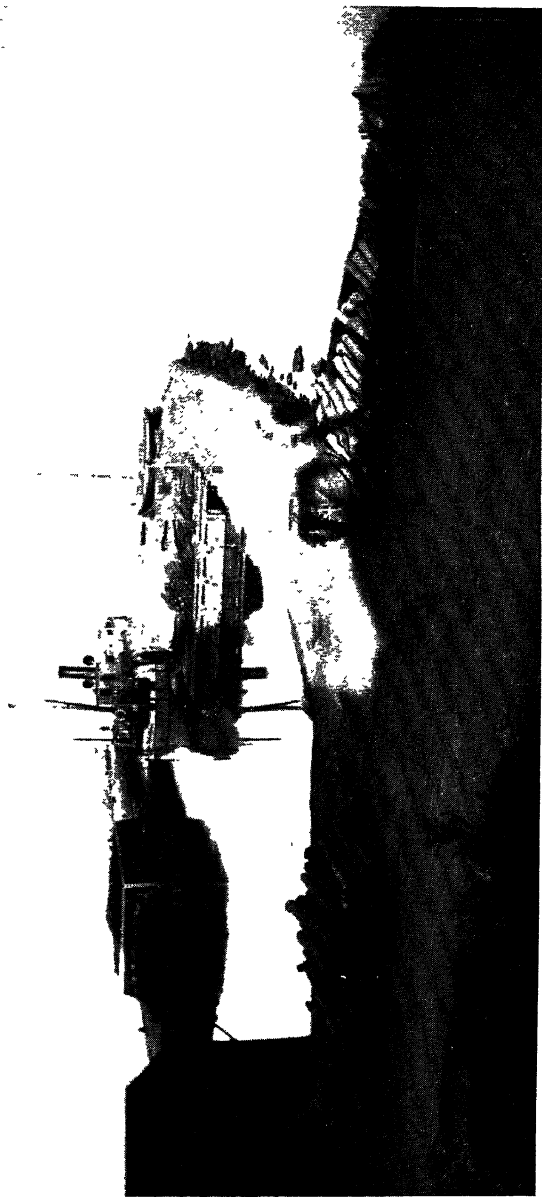
"Then we think your customs are disgusting," replied the indignant maids.

"Have you got tails that you don't dare to be seen without your clothes?" inquired the undefeated bath-house washers.

Apparently the maids could think of no suitable rejoinder to that, and so retired in impotent fury to complain to their mistresses.

Staying as a guest in the Clinique was a young Swede of about seventeen, a cousin of the owner of the place and a budding masseur. He was very sentimental, and addicted to poetry. Recognising in Miss Broughton a kindred literary spirit, he opened his heart to her and told her of his ambition to improve his English and satisfy his poetic soul by learning some English verse. Miss Broughton recommended Edgar Allan Poe as a beginning. From that day onwards the young man could be seen walking in the garden in the throes of learning by heart. In the evenings he suggested reciting to us the results of his efforts. In a sing-song Swedish voice he would begin and get along pretty well until he came to the word "tomb."

"And so he moored over Arabel Allan's *tum*," recited our youthful poet.



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One day he obliged his most appreciative audience with a pathetic poem about a broken-hearted young man desperately in love with a young woman, while a hard-hearted outsider kept on reiterating that the lady either couldn't or wouldn't ever be his.

"She will never, never be thine," insisted the hard-hearted outsider in the poem.

"She will never, never be thin," recited the unconscious Swede, which seemed to us quite likely if the lady came from northern climes.

Now and then the owner of the Clinique would ask his neighbours to come and dine with him. He called it inviting them for dinner, but in that case it looked as if the guests had invited themselves for luncheon as well, for they always arrived at about three o'clock and ate their way steadily through the whole afternoon and evening; the amount of food they got through, washed down with strong Swedish punch, was enormous.

The garden was famous for its white-heart cherries, which were some of the largest and best I have ever seen. The gardeners were ordered to gather them for the dinner-party. They evidently knew the capacity of the guests, for they filled a large wheel-barrow full before they considered they had gathered sufficient.

We were not invited to the dinner festivities, for Mother and Miss Broughton were on a strict régime as regards food, and, though there was nothing the matter with Father or me, as we were the only other foreigners staying in the place it was not considered worth while cooking different food for us, so perforce we also did a cure, but luckily for me cherries were not forbidden. Nobody need fear starvation in Sweden, where the food is admirable and the natives do ample justice to it.



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Effective in many instances as the Swedish system of massage undoubtedly is, in my Mother's case it was not of much avail. Let it be a warning to all young women, in view of a possible change in the present fashions, that I attribute my Mother's ill health certainly to a considerable extent to her tight lacing, to the seventeen- and eighteen-inch waists that were so admired in her day. It was not at the time that the fashionable young woman suffered, though I should think the acute discomfort must have bordered on it, but later in life the evil effects show themselves, at any rate they did in my Mother's case.

Still she was one of those persons possessed of that wonderful quality that all doctors and surgeons recognise, and for which we have no generally accepted word. Some people call it vital energy, some recuperative power; at any rate those persons who possess it have something upon which they can call in their extreme need and which does not fail them.

How often I have seen it: one man is brought in with a hideous wound, and in spite of it he lives and gets well: another, less seriously injured, throws up his hands and dies. A forced march and extreme exhaustion: one man, often a big strong-looking creature, collapses, just throws himself down, anywhere, anyhow, dead to supplications or commands: while another, with only half his physical strength, can be counted on to the last to make one more effort.

If I may again again digress, my own Mother was an instance in point. She was exceedingly ill, and our worried-looking country doctor was trying all sorts of experiments on her and apparently only succeeding in making her worse.

I insisted that she should go up to London and see a well-known Harley Street doctor, and as it meant

only an hour and a half in the train, I set off with her the following day.

We had a dreadful journey up to London. Mother was much worse even than I thought, and I was two hours with her in a waiting-room at Paddington before I could move her to her doctor's house.

The great man was waiting for us. He looked very grave and very pompous, and insisted on Mother being taken then and there to his private hospital, which was quite near. He wouldn't express any opinion, and said Mother must wait under observation until the following day, when he held out some hopes of being able to tell us what was the matter.

I spent an anxious night camped out in our London house, which was tied up in dust-sheets and felt like a tomb. Early next morning I was back at the private hospital, where the big man received me, more pompous than ever and, after a long rigmarole which told me nothing, begging me to compose myself and be calm, which I thought was unnecessary, he informed me he had satisfied himself that an immediate operation was necessary for Mother, and that he had made preparations to do it at once. At that moment, he assured me, the operating theatre was being got ready for her.

Dazed by this sudden and totally unexpected shock, I insisted on going up to see my Mother, and, refusing to listen to the doctor, I marched up the stairs and entered her room.

She was alone and sitting bolt upright in her bed. Before I had time to speak she pointed to some clothing on a chair.

"Etta," she said in her deep voice, "give me my boots!"

Why she asked for her boots I simply don't know,

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but in an instant I grasped what she meant. Feverishly I tumbled her into her clothes. Luckily in the excitement of a first-class operation the nurses had forgotten to remove them. Somehow or other I got them on to her, a big coat covered up the deficiencies, we pushed her hat on to her head, and then, in dead silence, I opened the door and, feeling like a burglar, I looked to see if the coast was clear. There was nobody in sight save a bloated page-boy bulging out of a claret-coloured jacket trimmed with three rows of shiny buttons.

Followed by Mother, I crept down the stairs; we pushed past the claret-coloured page-boy, who was too astonished to say anything, I opened the front door, and in another minute we were in a cab and away.

Need I say Mother never had that particular operation, and shortly afterwards got very much better?

Once my Mother was convinced that a certain course of action on her part was right, she would carry it through, no matter what obstacles might intervene, but she required proof, she was not prepared to accept a person's word for anything.

It was rather awkward at times. I remember once being at one of Mr. Gillett's radium parties at the Bachelors' Club. Radium was then a new thing, and there was much excitement and interest concerning it.

Mr. Gillett received his guests at the top of the stairs, and we were then shown into a room where we sat in rows on little gold chairs and listened to a lecturer who told us something about this wonderful new discovery.

At the close of the lecture we were shown two or three little tubes with glass at one end, in each of which, we were told, was a minute quantity of radium, and by placing an eye close to the end of the tube, we were



MISS RHODA BROUGHTON (LEFT) AND THE WRITER IN SWEDEN.

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assured we should see the radium inside, sparkling and sending out glittering rays.

The lights were lowered, and, imploring us to be careful with the precious stuff, the little tubes were handed about amongst the ladies present. Each one had a look, and numerous were the exclamations of astonishment and delight.

"How wonderful, how beautiful and how interesting!" said one society lady after the other.

At last it came to Mother's turn. She peeped into the little tube, turned it round, shook it very gently, and then declared she couldn't see anything.

"Don't you see the sparks and the glittering rays?" asked the other ladies.

"I'm sorry," said Mother, "but I can see nothing."

"Pray look again," said the lecturer, somewhat perturbed.

"I have looked," insisted Mother. "There is nothing there."

"This is dreadful," said the lecturer. "If the audience will excuse me, I will turn up the lights and see what has happened."

Amid silence the lights were turned up. All eyes were fixed on Mother, who still stuck to her point. The lecturer walked up to her and took the tube out of her hand. He stared into it.

"There is nothing," he said. "I suppose I forgot to put in the radium."

## RUSSIA

EARLY in September the time came for me to join my friend in St. Petersburg en route for China. Father and Mother intended staying a little longer in Sweden, and were then to return direct to England.

I had a most amusing time in Stockholm going over the Royal Palaces and lunching and dining with friends at one or other of the numerous and excellent restaurants. The Old Palace was delightful, filled with beautiful things: lovely old cut-glass chandeliers and Chinese porcelain, Sang de Bœuf and so on, set in ormolu.

The New Palace was correspondingly hideous, and I did not know what to say when I was asked to admire a tea-table made entirely of china. The base was a pug dog complete even to the ribbon and locket round its neck; it was curled up as if asleep, and from the centre of it grew a parasol, also, of course, in china, on the spreading top of which were the tea-pot and saucers. I could only acknowledge that I had never seen a table like it before, and silently hoped that the artist who designed it had died before he could perpetrate a second.

I then embarked on the ship that was to take me across the Baltic, and from her deck admired innumerable little islands, so green and set in such a bright blue sea that they seemed unreal. They looked as if they had been turned out of a toy shop complete down to the little red cows that were eating the vivid green

grass, and the little maids in bright cotton frocks who doubtless milked the little red cows and lived in the bright red-and-white toy houses set amongst the fir trees that might just have come out of a new Noah's Ark. It was all charming and happy and gay, and over all shone a warm sun that brought out the scent of the hay that the little red cows would doubtless eat later on.

On board the ship was a very pleasant Russian, Count Pierre Schilowsky, whose full title was "Gentilhomme de la Chambre de S. M. l'Empereur, Vice-Gouverneur de Simbirsk." He spoke, of course, excellent French, and walking up and down the deck he talked openly about his own country in a way that he explained he would never dare to do once he had landed on Russian soil.

It was curious how this man anticipated then what has since come to pass in Russia. Time after time he repeated to me that our large middle-class constitutes the safety of England, and the absence of a middle-class the danger in Russia.

"We have nothing between the Prince at the top and the *moujik* at the bottom," he said. "The *moujik* cannot read, and his one desire and longing is to possess the land on which he works."

The Count went on to explain how the Duma had passed a law not only allowing, but encouraging the great Princes to sell their property to the peasants. What had been the result? The great landowners had only been too glad, they had sold millions of acres, and the peasants had not only spent every penny they possessed, but had borrowed money from the Jews to enable them to purchase more land, leaving no margin for working expenses, seed and so on.

"The result is that we have only changed the great



## *Excursions and Some Adventures*

landowner for the Jew, and are infinitely worse off than we were before. When there was a famine in the old days I could always get help from the rich for the poor on their estates. Who can get help from a Jew?" cried the Count. "One day, when the Jews have squeezed him dry, the *moujik* will turn on them, but what can they do, those poor ignorant peasants? Then will come the turn of the Jews, and they will show the *moujiks* what they really are, an organised world force with brains and money, and I can see how my poor country will run with blood. We are so helpless," cried the Count, "we who see what is coming are so few, and the others are so many, and most of the rich do not want to know, they do not want to be made uncomfortable."

On board the ship no one could have been more pleasant and open than the Count was. We were on neutral ground, and he was not afraid to speak out; he even ventured to give me a little advice.

"When you are in my country," he told me, "be careful never to mention the Government, or the Royal Family; never criticise the administration in any way, it is not safe. Along the Trans-Siberian Railway you will often see the white trains taking political prisoners to Siberia; you may look at them, but do not speak of them, even to your friend. You may be overheard."

This advice was on a par with what I had been told both in London and Stockholm. Not only was I warned that the hotels were under police control and full of spies, but also that there were holes arranged in the ceilings of some of the rooms from which the police could both see and hear everything that was going on below.

I was told that not long before, a young diplomat, attached to a certain Embassy, had been what was

called "injudicious," that, in fact, he had talked openly about matters concerning the Government which he ought properly to have kept quiet. One day he disappeared. His distracted relations hunted high and low for him. For four months they heard nothing, could get no information of any kind about him. At last they believed him to be dead, when, suddenly, one day he reappeared. He had been shut up in a fortress, just as a gentle reminder to be more careful in the future.

That it was no joking matter was evident from the Count's behaviour. The night before we arrived at St. Petersburg he had been as pleasant and agreeable as usual, the next morning he disappeared without a word. One took no risks in Russia in pre-war days.

The nearer we got to Russia the more deserted became the little islands in the Baltic Sea; gone were the little red-and-white houses and the little maids with the little red cows. The islands were still lovely, but they were a tangle of fir and birch trees, and no one lived on them, so far as I could see.

We passed Helsingfors in Finland without stopping. I saw the little town through a haze of fine mist, which got heavier as we got nearer to St. Petersburg, where I finally landed in pouring rain—rain and mud everywhere—nothing could have been more depressing than my first glimpse of Russia. A few porters lounged about on the quayside, big hairy creatures in flat caps and high boots. I quite appreciated why Russians wear high boots as I picked my way over the stones and scrambled with my belongings into one of the little carriages of the country.

Then came my first difficulty. My friend had written to me from London telling me the day and the place where I was to meet her, but the hotel she

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mentioned did not exist. However, I knew the train by which she was due to arrive, and thankful I was when she turned up safely at the station.

Unfortunately when we were in St. Petersburg there was a nasty epidemic of cholera about, and people were dropping down in the streets with sudden attacks of it. In consequence, the picture galleries were closed, and the churches—the other great attraction for strangers—were crowded with frightened peasants kneeling on the filthy floors before the sacred ikons, floors that looked as if they had never seen soap and water since they were put down, and, of course, there was no such thing as an open window; I don't suppose any of the Russian church windows were capable of being opened, we certainly saw none. No wonder Russia was always a hot-bed of disease.

Tired of being pushed about amongst the crowds in the older churches, we one day found our way into the modern one built over the spot in one of the main streets where the Czar Alexander was killed by a bomb as he was passing along in his sledge.

The low September sun was pouring in through the windows when we entered; it lit up the priceless marbles with which the church is lined, especially one that is plum colour, with what appear to be small pieces of blue butterfly wings floating in it. Round the sides of the church are the sacred pictures, many of them hung with strings of real pearls and other jewels, and in the midst of all this splendour, enclosed by a low bronze railing, is the six feet of the common cobblestones of the street where the Czar was murdered.

While we were gazing at this sermon without words a procession of priests and singers filed in, elderly men whose long black beards fell to their waists over their white woollen habits; they ranged

themselves round the bronze railings and, without any accompaniment, one of the choir opened with a low deep note, which was taken up by another, and then another, until the sound, like that of a great organ, filled the whole of the vast church and lost itself in the cupolas far above our heads. Nothing could have been more impressive. When the deep base voices died away, a priest intoned a prayer, and again the choir took up their Gregorian chant, and the volume of sound again filled every corner of the church.

"*Sic transit gloria mundi*," we thought, and there, indeed, in that great church, came back to us with a rush that sense of proportion, of the proper value of the things of this world, which it is so hard to get, and when got, so difficult to keep.

It is curious how the natives of hot climates like India and Africa never seem to anticipate a cold night. So far as I have seen they rarely take another garment with them; if they do it is for show and ornament, and seldom or never for protection against bad weather. For some unknown reason the inhabitants of cold climates seem equally averse to taking off anything. In that hot early September weather, with the sun boiling down on the streets of St. Petersburg, the drivers of the little open cabs wore their thick padded winter coats, and looked as bulky and sack-like on their little driving seats as they did later on in the middle of January. Can it be that the human frame, thanks to being overheated in summer, is capable of putting by a store of warmth for winter use?

At any rate, in hot countries it does not work satisfactorily, and unless a traveller in the tropics looks after the well-being of his porters at night, he is likely to find himself handicapped with some melancholy invalids on his hands in the morning.

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The country between St. Petersburg and Moscow is too well known to be worth describing, except so far as to say that it is very flat, very dreary-looking, and that the only conspicuous features in the numerous little grey villages are the churches and the bath-houses. The inhabitants of some countries wash themselves, but not their clothes, some wash their clothes, but never themselves, and some, of course, do both.

In Russia before the war no peasant, even the very poorest, ever missed his or her weekly bath. The would-be washers, men and women together, boil in the stream made by pouring water on hot stones, a very wholesome, cleanly process; but the whole benefit is undone, according, at any rate, to our ideas, by the fact that after their baths are over they proceed to put on again the same exceedingly dirty clothes which they were wearing before they went in.

We had arranged to spend a few days in Moscow on our way through so as to see the town, and especially the Kremlin. I did not realise until I saw it that the Kremlin is surrounded by a high wall, and is as much a little town unto itself as our Tower of London. Inside the walls are the three churches in which the Czars are—or were—married, crowned and buried. They were smaller than I expected them to be, and seemed more in the nature of private chapels, which, indeed, I suppose they really were. All were very gorgeous, and the third—the one in which the Czars are buried—appeared to be full of their shallow, bronze tombs. In fact, I remarked to Henriette that the reigning Czar must be the last, for there was absolutely no room for more after him. I little dreamed how tragically true my words were to prove.

We were then taken to see the state apartments of Czar Ivan the Terrible, also inside the Kremlin, and

I believe occupied by Napoleon during the few days he stayed in Moscow. Like those in most ancient buildings, the rooms were very small—indeed they were no larger and no higher than a superior wine-cellar in a large country house. Except that the rooms were above ground and that the windows were decorated with coloured glass, the rooms were cellar-like indeed ; there were the same low doors and domed ceilings, though these were covered with crude frescoes, while the walls were several feet thick.

If this ancient Palace was small and poky, the modern one was large and imposing enough. The rooms and corridors seemed to extend for miles ; our eyes got tired of gazing at the gorgeous gilt bronze and at the silver tables and chairs. We saw rooms upholstered in the colours of the ribbons of various Russian orders, yellow and black, pale blue and so on, while I remarked that the door-handles of one drawing-room were cut out of solid lumps of chrysoprase.

Satiated with the sight of so much uncomfortable grandeur, and tired from walking over miles of Aubusson carpets, at intervals we went to fortify ourselves for more sight-seeing at a particularly excellent restaurant. I wonder if I shall ever eat again caviare such as we had there ! It is an insult to compare the sticky substance we buy here at a high price with that ethereal food, light as foam, which, to preserve the eggs from being crushed, arrived on wooden sieves, in layers a couple of inches thick ; to which the waiters helped us, not by the meagre spoonful, but piled up bountifully on our plates. I look back upon that caviare as one of the few really delicious dishes I have been fortunate enough to taste.

What particularly interested me was the remarkable collection of old English silver in the Imperial Treasury.

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Ever since the time of Queen Elizabeth our English merchants had wisely taken a gift in their hands when asking for a concession from the various Rulers of all the Russias, and a most beautiful collection their gifts proved to be; more interesting, I thought, than the crowns and suits of armour, and the masses of gems belonging to the various Czars. Doubtless the latter were of great value, but all precious stones are much alike, and an uncut ruby, however large, was to me little more interesting than a piece of glass.

It was at Moscow that we got into the Trans-Siberian train which was to take us all the way to Harbin in Manchuria, a ten days' journey. We had already taken our tickets some weeks before, and had then listened with joy to the clerk in the London office who described to us the luxury of the weekly train; the food, he said, rivalled that of the best restaurants, and the bathrooms on the train were conspicuous for what the clerk called their "luxurious appointments."

It all sounded very delightful, but when we got into the train the carriages looked very much like those on the ordinary continental wagon-lit trains, and it appeared that we had to share the usual modest washing-place with our next-door neighbours who—happily for us—were English.

In the excitement of leaving Moscow I did not go into the question of the bathroom, but the next morning I went out to explore. With some difficulty I ran down the *chef de train*, who was playing cards with a fat, shiny individual whom I recognised as our cook.

"Will you please show me the bathroom?" I asked most politely in French.

The *chef de train* looked at the cook, who was licking his thumb and counting out some greasy bank-notes.

The cook glanced back, but said nothing. The *chef de train* shrugged his shoulders and affected not to understand, which was rather peculiar, inasmuch as on the previous evening he had spoken French with considerable fluency.

I repeated my question in German, whereupon the two had a conversation in Russian, in which the cook seemed to take exception to what the *chef de train* was saying.

Determined not to be beaten, I repeated my question in every language I could think of, and as a bath is generally about the first thing one asks for in a new country, I managed to muster up quite a number.

The *chef de train* again addressed the cook in an unknown tongue, and the cook replied with some heat. The *chef de train* sucked his pencil, looked at me and then out of the window, and at last announced that he was busy.

"Then I will wait until you are not busy," I replied.

Upon which, realising, I suppose, the ten days of my company that lay before him, the *chef de train* and the cook rose to their feet and, still disputing, they beckoned me to follow them; which I did. Up along the train we went, bumping along corridors, through luggage vans and kitchens, until we arrived at a door which the cook unlocked with a key out of his pocket. There was the bathroom, and there was the full-length bath, complete with taps marked hot and cold, and a shower; perfectly appointed as the London clerk described, but alas! for my hopes—it was filled to the brim with hams, while piled in all the spare corners of the compartment were other portions of the genus pig, upon which, no doubt, the passengers would be regaled during our journey.

Russia to my eyes looked a tragic and mournful



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country. It was too flat to be picturesque, and so monotonous that one could go to sleep for some hours and on awaking could hardly believe that the train had moved on in the meanwhile. There can be no brooks in a country with no hills, no delightful anticipation as to what one will find round the next corner when already one can see for miles in any direction.

However, I suppose you do not miss what you have never known, and the people, though poor and dirty, did not look unhappy; on the contrary, they lounged about the railway stations talking and staring at the train, and every one of them seemed to be cracking and eating sunflower seeds, then just ripe, and strewing the platforms with empty shells, until they looked like chicken runs.

As we got nearer the Ural Mountains, which, no doubt, exist, though I saw no more than rolling hills that might have been in Wales, the condition of the people improved, and the women were better dressed, in bright red and blue cottons. The crops had been gathered in, and threshing with flails was going on busily. Once in Siberia, on the other side of the Urals, the change was remarkable; in Russia were poverty and dirt, in Siberia riches and prosperity.

If I had not known the contrary, I might have imagined I was back in Canada just where the forests merge into the prairie lands. Here were the same rich black soil, the same woods of pine and birch, and the same rosy-looking children climbing on the fences to watch the passing of our train.

Whenever we stopped, generally for water for the engine, I got out; and at Omsk and other places noticed kegs of butter piled up as high as cottages, all marked in English for the British markets. There were thousands of eggs for the same destination,

which, one would think, after so long a journey, would be only fit for election purposes, but I believe they passed muster as "cooking" eggs on arrival in London.

Everywhere new agricultural implements, resplendent in red and bright blue paint, were arriving, tall men were striding about in good clothes and high leather boots; there was every sign of busy, happy life, and I never saw a beggar.

At first I could not understand why the railway scorned to go in a straight line and, regardless of the contour lines of the country, wound about for no apparent reason. Sometimes it would go close to a small town, and at others avoid large ones altogether, until finally I found out that it ran in direct ratio to the bribes offered to the engineers when constructing the line. Omsk has the enormous advantage of having the railway at its doors, Tomsk, on the contrary, has been completely left in the cold; it was once the capital town of Siberia, and had thought itself too important for the engineers to dare to ignore it, and therefore refused to bribe them. When we passed through the station the town was miles away, and had fallen from its once high estate into comparative obscurity.

The railway stations were most amusing and interesting. There were semi-precious stones for sale—aquamarines and so on—which we bought, and we also supplemented the food on the train by buying cooked wild duck and game of all sorts, and as we only had about ten minutes to do it in, our buying had all the excitement of an auction.

It appeared that in those days the *chef de train* and the cook undertook to feed the passengers at so much per head, and made what they could out of the bargain.

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I must say that the two on our train must have made small fortunes. I think sturgeon was probably cheap in the markets of Moscow when they prepared for our journey, for sturgeon appeared regularly at every meal. It is more like veal than fish, so we thought, but not the best veal, and we got desperately tired of it before the ten days were over. We had tea to drink, served in tumblers with a slice of lemon; it was excellent, and with the added advantage that it could be had at any time through the day and far into the night.

The people travelling with us in the train were a most extraordinarily mixed lot. One of the passengers assured me that he had counted thirteen different nationalities and eleven languages spoken at one and the same time in the refreshment-car.

Of the truth of that I cannot say, but just a few of the different types were obvious—the Japanese, for instance, and the florid, blue-eyed northern Germans, also the Mediterranean group, with black flashing eyes and gesticulating hands. Of course, there were plenty of Russians, but they slept all day and only appeared in the evening, and seemed to get thoroughly awake and lively towards two o'clock in the morning. But besides all these, there was another group of short, round-headed, square-shouldered people, the men and women very much alike and exceedingly ugly to my eyes; not even the young girls had the redeeming feature of good complexions; all were dark with yellow skins which were inclined to be shiny, and flat black hair destitute of a curl or a wave.

The surprising thing was the way those particular passengers talked; they jabbered volubly all day long, as if they had only just met, instead of having already—to our certain knowledge—passed several days

together. What they talked about goodness only knows. It was not about the Government, that was certain; they cannot have been talking about books, for they were never seen to open one; while, as to the country though which we passed, they hardly ever glanced out of the window except at a station. I used often to watch them, especially one party of four, two rather elderly men, a young one and a woman. One of the elderly men would begin. He did not appear to be worked up by what he was saying, he simply laid down the law while the others grunted at intervals; but when at last he had finished, he would look round with his little black eyes in a "You dare to contradict me at your peril" sort of manner. The woman, who appeared to have only one dress, and that a mud-coloured cotton, and who looked as if a third or fourth class carriage was more the place for her than a first, would shift her arms, which were for ever sprawling over the table in front of her; then, muttering something or other, she would wriggle about in an awkward manner, and then start on a long harangue. This went on all day long.

Wherever I have travelled, the lower the class people belong to the more they seem to have to say to each other. Black porters in Africa will hobnob for hours with others they have just met for the first time. It is the same with Chinese coolies and low-caste Indians. Often I have asked what they were talking about, and always the subjects were the same: the price of food, markets generally, and the extortionate demands of fathers of desirable maidens, combined with liberal abuse of all mothers-in-law.

Anybody in England will have remarked the conversational powers of the plumber's young man and the jobbing gardener, while as to char-ladies, their

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tongues never stop. Higher in the social scale I have noticed that the middle-class ladies in a 'bus generally preserve a haughty silence, while, in smart restaurants, the gilded youth of the day, presumably sitting next to the object of his admiring affections, never speaks at all!

As we got further into Siberia the scenery became more lovely; not because of the rivers, which were too large, too deep and swift to be anything but impressive, but because of the beauty of the birch trees, which had turned colour and become the most lovely golden yellow. I have seen much of Canada and have been through the Rocky Mountains in the fall, but beautiful as the maples are, they cannot compare, to my mind, with the birch trees in Siberia in September. We all remember the story of the little princess in the fairy tale and the avenue of trees whose leaves were of gold. Here were the trees, millions of them, their white bark adding to the yellow beauty of the leaves. These birches were particularly lovely when growing on the sides of the hills, each little round leaf fluttering in the air and shining like a new golden sovereign. Even when the trees were bare they were almost equally lovely, for then their feet were covered by what seemed a carpet of gold. Alas! there were serpents even in this paradise, for I noticed that the men working on the line were all wearing mosquito veils, even during the day.

Bearing in mind what we had been told about the "white" or convict trains, we were careful not to draw attention to them, though we saw them constantly. There was no mistaking them, painted white with a large Imperial black eagle; they had no windows, only a ventilator on the roof, and but one door at the

end, which was always guarded by a soldier with a loaded rifle.

These trains were used for political prisoners, going, most of them, to the island of Sakhalin, north of Japan, on the far east coast of Siberia. They only ran during the day. At night the poor things inside were taken out into prisons, bungalow-like places with high white walls round them, generally near lonely-looking stations.

On our return journey through Siberia in the middle of winter, we were fortunate enough to have Mr. Balsillie with us in the train. A wireless expert, he had lately been employed by the Russian Government in putting up stations across Siberia for the convenience of officials taking convicts by road.

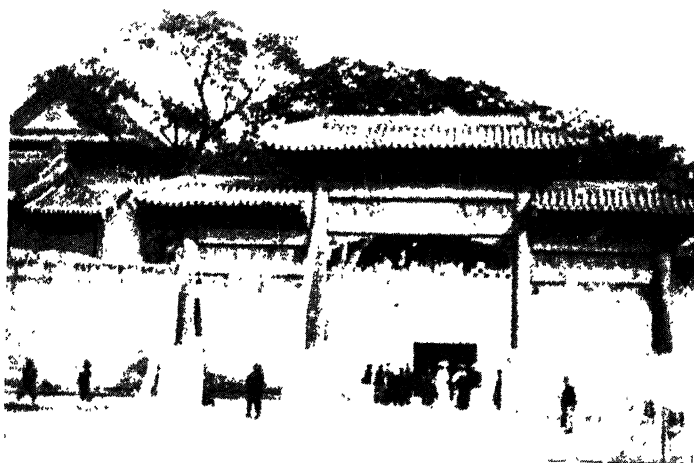
Mr. Balsillie, who is an Australian, had, of course, often seen these unfortunate people, and his account of them haunted me for many a day. Of course, it must be remembered these latter convicts were not politicals, but murderers and other evil characters, of which there are a certain number in every country. Most of them came from the large towns, and were made to walk the two or three thousand miles to the mines where they were to work out their sentences. Mr. Balsillie told me that most of those he saw were chained to each other with light chains fastened round their wrists, but the worst and most dangerous wore heavy leg irons as well, and the friction of these had in some cases worn away the skin and the flesh of the prisoners' ankles, leaving several inches of shining white bone. We never saw any of these miserable people, they were taken by special routes and unfrequented paths away from towns and railways, where, if they did manage to escape, they would most probably die of hunger.

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Near Lake Baikal I felt the real charm of Siberia ; there were the wide open spaces, the ever-changing hills and forests, and the blue lake itself, with a lovely range of snow mountains in the distance. In the low-lying marshes were many wild-fowl, and overhead wedge-shaped flights of geese already moving southwards. A day later the lake had disappeared, and the snow mountains were gone, the hills, too, had given place to undulating steppes, covered with grass and destitute of trees, which extended on all sides as far as the eye could see. This was Manchuria.

These steppes are the happy hunting-grounds of nomad tribes who delight to hold up the trains and loot the unfortunate passengers, so, for our protection, armed soldiers were placed in the railway corridors, and very bored the poor things looked as they sat there clutching their rifles and smoking the cigarettes we gave them.

Up to now I had found every minute of our journey of the greatest interest, but I must allow that these endless steppes are dull. There were occasional villages and large herds of cattle with armed men in charge of them, but for hours we would see no sign of life—nothing but miles of grass-covered, undulating hills extending for hundreds of miles on all sides of us, sufficient, it seemed, to feed the flocks of the whole world, if only people were content to be peaceful and not continually at each other's throats.



ONE OF THE PALACE GATES, PEKING.



THE IMPERIAL GARDENERS WEEDING

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## MANCHURIA

ON the tenth day after leaving Moscow we arrived at Harbin, the most important town in Manchuria. Here we were to quit the Russian train and go due south to Mukden, and thence later on to Peking. Right glad were we when we got out on the platform, and finding that the Chinese eastern train did not leave until the evening, we had time to drive to the town to buy food to eat on our journey south, for we knew we should find nothing en route.

Outside the station were several little carriages drawn up and, accompanied by Mr. Hillier, then Inspector-General of Chinese Customs, we got into one to drive to the town. We had barely half a mile to go, but it took two ponies and much abuse on the part of our driver to get us there. There was no road, nothing but a wide expanse of mud and water cut up in every direction by wheel-tracks. Crawling at a foot's pace, alternately plunging into holes and scrambling out of them, it took us nearly an hour to go that half-mile, the ponies sinking over their knees at every step, while we, unable to look right or left, hung on with both hands and were bumped black and blue.

At last we arrived, and were invited to get out on to a board. This was the side-walk of the town, and the only means of arriving at the shops was along single planks, the ends of which were balanced on little stone islands in the surrounding sea of mud. It was a very funny sight to watch the other shoppers. They would

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totter painfully and carefully along a plank, and then, meeting somebody coming in the opposite direction, the two would waltz carefully round each other on one of the little islands which—only being made of a few loose stones—often rolled away from under the walkers' feet and landed them up to their knees in the surrounding morass.

On the whole I think Harbin at that time was the most disreputable-looking town I had ever seen. The shops that had large plate-glass windows in front were like broken-down bungalows at the back with iron roofs, but most of the "houses" consisted of tin packing-cases and old paraffin-oil tins flattened out and nailed on to a few boards. In these hovels lived the scum and riff-raff of the followers of the Russian army, for the Russo-Japanese War was only lately ended and, like the flotsam and jetsam of the sea at high tide, these people had been cast up at Harbin; and the receding army, like the sea, had left them there—Chinese, Russians—they were of all nationalities, and all poor, dirty and wretched.

We had luncheon in what was then the best hotel, for which we were charged London prices for very indifferent food. Later on, when staying with Mr. Watson at Mukden, he told us that as Postmaster-General for Northern Manchuria, a district about the size of France and Germany combined, his duties had taken him to Harbin, and he had been obliged to spend a night in this hotel. At about midnight Mr. Watson had been awakened by revolver shots outside his bedroom, apparently in the passage. Getting up to see what was the matter, he peeped carefully through his door, and found the black prima-donna, a negress from the one and only theatre, weeping over the corpse of a white man, while the murderer, revolver in

hand, was making his escape down the further end of the passage. Mr. Watson withdrew carefully into his room, barricaded his door with all the available furniture and, directly it was light, made his escape.

After lunch we did our shopping. We found diamonds for sale—at a price; and plenty of champagne, also fearfully expensive, while vodka was running like water and could be had anywhere. Finally we got what we wanted. Mr. Hillier carried several long loaves of bread like a baby in his arms, in one coat pocket he carried a pot of jam, in the other a pot of marmalade, while Henriette and I carried various paper parcels and a pie which was my special charge.

Very carefully, one at a time, we made our way along the planks. I may remark that it is somewhat of a triumph to succeed in passing a dirty *moujik* on a small heap of stones when handicapped as I was. Then came the dreadful drive back to the station; we floundered into one hole after another.

“There goes the marmalade,” cried poor Mr. Hillier, thrown violently to the right; “there goes the jam,” as he fell to the left.

I am told that all this is changed now, that Harbin is a prosperous town with public gardens and paved roads, which, to those who remember it in 1908, sounds almost unbelievable.

After leaving Harbin, this time in a Chinese eastern train, and still guarded by Russian soldiers, we went due south through flat, fertile-looking country, until we arrived at Chang-Chun, where we changed on to the Japanese railway, guarded by funny little Japanese soldiers with flat yellow faces, and arrived safely at Mukden, where kind Mr. Watson met us and took us to stay with him in his comfortable Chinese house.

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This was my first introduction to Chinese servants. Our host seemed to have numbers of them. Of course, they are—or were—the best servants in the world. They all looked the same to me, with their inscrutable faces and horribly intelligent slits of eyes, and they had an uncanny way, too, of turning up unexpectedly without making a sound in their thick felt slippers.

“How wonderful your servants are!” I said to Mr. Watson, as I watched with admiration the tall slender men dressed in spotless white who waited upon us at dinner.

Mr. Watson did not seem to share my enthusiasm.

“And look at their hands and feet,” said a nice Frenchwoman who heard my remark; “there is not a coolie in China who has not got smaller feet and more beautiful taper fingers than I.”

It was quite true, every Chinese man, even the commonest, has beautiful hands and feet.

“How long their hair is!” I said, for their pigtails reached as far as their knees.

“Only a bit of it is hair, the rest is black tape,” explained Mr. Watson.

“Behold, here is a perfect dinner, and your cook cannot have had more than a couple of hours in which to prepare for a dozen guests!” I cried.

“We are only a dozen at this table,” said Mr. Watson, “but really I suppose I am entertaining about thirty-six or forty guests to-night, besides my servants.”

Amazed, I asked for an explanation.

“At this moment, outside my back door, there is a queue of at least twenty-four Chinese, probably more,” said Mr. Watson. “They are the relations of my servants, and by immemorial custom, the only law we know here, they are entitled to what is left of every dish when removed from this room. The relations

of Lao Ting, my head boy, will perhaps regale themselves to-night on the remains of the soup we have just had, while the family of Weng Cho, my No. 2 boy, will have the fish, and so on through my entire household; while, so that there may be true equality tempered with desirable variety, they will also have arranged between themselves that the family who to-night partook of the soup shall to-morrow enjoy the fish, while my cook will see to it that his popularity is maintained by providing not only sufficient for me and my friends, but enough over and above to satisfy the demands of the urgent ones at the back door."

"And I understood China was a cheap country to live in," I said.

"In this country," said Mr. Watson, "squeeze, as they call it, has been reduced to a fine art; you can't put your finger on it, for it is everywhere. At first newcomers try to fight against it, but in the end we are all defeated, we all have to give in. How can you put an end to a custom which was practised here when England was inhabited by savages painted with woad and dressed in skins? Of course, we are helpless in their hands."

The next day I was taken for my first walk in a Chinese town, and immensely interesting I found it. Of course Mukden, being in northern Manchuria, is not so crowded as the true Chinese towns of the south, and, thank goodness, was also cleaner and less smelly. The Manchu women do not squeeze their feet, and at first I found it rather difficult to tell them from the men.

The chemists' shops were the first thing to attract my notice. They were filled with the most fearsome-looking objects, probably only roots and leaves, with a few dried snakes and lizards thrown in, but as the

## *Excursions and Some Adventures*

ringing of a dentist's doorbell will cure anything but the very worst of toothaches, so the very sight of these horrid objects is calculated to, and probably, I imagine, does, take away many of the pains of the afflicted.

Second only in interest were the poulterers' shops, where there hung rows of cold roasted ducks, all of the most appetising shade of pale brown and so shiny that we could not help thinking that they must have been varnished. Duck enters largely into Chinese cooking, so does pig; but while the ducks looked attractive when alive, the pigs did not, and the sight of them took away all my desire for pork.

I never saw cooked dog offered for sale, at least not that I am aware of, but a cold roast puppy with its legs neatly folded under it and its head and paws cut off, cannot be so very unlike a nice fat little pig. I may not have recognised the difference. At any rate, the Chinese for food is *chouw*, and the dogs we admire so much are not kept in China for pets.

In the afternoon we drove out two miles to see the tomb of a famous Manchu Emperor. Two little carriages arrived. A Chinese driver sat in front of each and drove the woolly pony in the shafts. Henriette and Mr. Watson packed themselves on to the back seat of one carriage, while the English Consul and I took possession of the other. At first I sat in the usual conventional manner, but as there was no back to the seat and the ground was exceedingly bumpy, I soon found myself, with an instinct for self-preservation, clutching the Consul round the neck. Rather afraid of what Henriette might think, I looked to see how she was getting on, and was glad to see that Mr. Watson was suffering from semi-asphyxiation—Henriette had *both* arms round his neck!

The Manchu tomb was enchanting. We drove

first over a flat plain, threading our way amongst a number of Chinese graves. Then we reached a wood of slender trees festooned with bunches of mistletoe with scarlet berries. In the centre of the wood was a pink wall about eight feet high, and at a gateway leading through it we left the carriages, and walked into the enclosure. Within was a grove of some variety of fir I had never seen before. The trees were dark green and very old and twisted, and the sound of the wind sighing through them was like the sea a long way off. In the centre of the grove were the curling yellow roofs of the tomb, the Imperial colour. Except for two or three priests or monks, the place was deserted, and the whole feeling of it peaceful and most impressive.



## CHINA

1908

ALL my life I had heard of the beauty of Japan, but I never remember reading of the charm of Chinese scenery, and yet I believe—always with the exception of the incomparable Fuji—that one country is almost as beautiful as the other, with the added attraction in China of the colour of the clothes of the workers in the fields.

Contrary to the general belief in England, the Japanese, as a rule, wear sad-coloured clothes; only the children and the theatre ladies blossom out into gorgeous colours. In China, on the contrary, the hills are terraced up to the top with tiny fields and, working in them, little figures that might have stepped out of a willow-pattern plate; there were the familiar straw hats like pudding basins and the beautiful indigo-dyed cotton clothes that made the wearers glow in the bright sunshine like living sapphires.

Nor had anybody in England mentioned to me the wonderfully invigorating air of Northern China, at any rate in the early autumn; it was really like champagne. Later on in Tokyo I was introduced at the British Embassy to Mr. Tong, at that time Chinese Viceroy of Manchuria. Mr. Tong had been educated in America, and spoke English as fluently and a good deal more grammatically than I did. He was most polite, but did not seem very forthcoming. I told him how impressed I had been by his country. Mr.

Tong bowed; he did not believe a word I said. Undefeated, I went on to say how exhilarating I found the climate of Peking. Mr. Tong bowed again. I began to feel sorry I had asked to be introduced to him, but making one more effort, I said that in my experience only one other country could compare with China as regards climate.

"And what country is that?" inquired Mr. Tong.

"Round about Johannesburg, in South Africa," I replied.

It was curious how in one moment Mr. Tong's attitude completely changed.

"It is true," he said. "I have a friend out there who tells me the same thing."

After that he became most friendly, and when a year later Mr. Tong came to London, he brought me a present of four beautiful white foxskins, and proved a great success in our family circle, except that he would shake hands with the butler, a large and impressive person, much more impressive, indeed, according to Chinese ideas, than my comparatively attenuated Father. While as a player of bridge I have never met anybody who could hold a candle to Mr. Tong.

Peking is too well known for me to venture to describe it. Almost the first day we arrived there I was taken for a walk on the top of one of the high walls built to protect the city from invasion. From sixty feet up we looked down on the multitude of little grey houses below. It was evening, and the sun was setting in a flood of crimson and gold, and, as all the world over, at sundown the evening meal was being prepared, and a faint haze of blue smoke made the scene wonderfully mysterious and picturesque.

Also walking on the city wall were a number of Chinese taking their pet birds out for an airing.

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They looked charming, those benign people, each with a little stick in his hand with a cross-piece on the top, on which was perched the little bird, tied with a bit of string round its leg. They were quite tame, and the owners whistled and talked softly to them as they walked slowly along "eating the evening air."

Some of the Chinese had their children with them, little boys and girls all very demure and strangely self-possessed, but from highest to lowest, all through China, from Mukden to Shanghai, I never saw a miserable or an ill-fed child—so much for the most conservative race in the world. Whatever they may be to each other or to "foreign devils," the Chinese are invariably good to children.

"These people," said my companion, "are wondering what we are doing, what brings us here."

"Isn't it enough that we come for a walk to look at this exquisite sunset?" I inquired.

"Not to a Chinese mind," was the reply; "they never do anything without an object. Watch me now and you will see."

My companion picked up a small piece of stone that happened to be lying at his feet; he looked at it, turned it over several times, put it down on the top of the coping and, leaving it there, we walked on until we came to one of the watch-towers built at intervals along the great wall. Then we stopped and, hidden from view, looked at the spot where the bit of stone had been left. Already a Chinaman had found it and was looking at it, and was turning it over as my friend had done.

"You see, he is wondering why I picked up that stone, seeking for an object in what I did. That is the Chinese mind. They are above all things a practical people."

One of my greatest desires had been to see the famous Chinese Empress, I suppose the most able, if also the most unscrupulous, woman of our time. Unfortunately, when we were in Peking she was already ill, and died soon after we left.

That she was an extraordinary woman everyone was aware while she was alive, but it is only since her death that people have really appreciated how truly remarkable she was. One little woman of low birth, living in the seclusion of a palace, showed that she was able, by sheer force of character and intelligence, to control a great nation. She must have had much in common with another great Queen, Elizabeth of England. Both knew the secret of pitting one man against another, and thereby keeping the balance of power in their own hands; but, of course, the Empress of China had the great advantage of being able to poison off any inconvenient person without a question being asked, a possibility that, no doubt, tended to promote absolute obedience in those around her.

I was greatly disappointed not to have seen the last of the great despots, but it was interesting to hear about her from people who had met her personally. All told me that her voice was of particular charm and beauty, and once heard could never be forgotten, also that her power over birds was remarkable; even wild ones were content to come to her call, a power I have met with before, and also in connection with a person who, like the Empress, was not troubled with many qualms of conscience, and did not hesitate to use, when required, the despotic methods of an unamiable tyrant.

However, thanks to the kindness of the French Minister, we were included in his party when he went to have tea in the Winter Palace, and we were shown

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over the Imperial gardens. It was an interesting party, for amongst the number were Dr. Vaillant, recently returned from Turkestan and Northern Tibet, and Commandant d'Ollon, who was just back from a still more adventurous journey from Tonquin to Tibet, a journey through unknown country inhabited, he told us, by people called Lolos and Miewes, and as tigerish and wild in character as their names would lead one to suppose.

On arrival at the great gates, which were guarded by a few sloppy-looking soldiers, we were received by a number of Palace notables, one of the most important being the Head Eunuch, a person who then stood high in his Imperial Mistress's estimation. Looking at him with an unprejudiced eye, I thought I had never before seen anybody quite so evil-looking; he looked capable of anything; indeed, he was generally credited with the poisoning with his own hands of several persons of high degree, including the young Emperor, who, it seems, was put away by him by order of the Empress herself. There were several other unattractive-looking persons, but for out and out villainy the Head Eunuch was easily first in my estimation.

I quite expected to find these grandees dressed in gorgeously embroidered robes, but they all wore plain silks, generally dark blue; nor did I see the decorations of the red button and the peacock's feather, of which we have heard so much. For all their lurid reputations, these Palace notables bore the stamp of good breeding: there was no mistaking any of them for common coolies.

We were given tea directly we arrived, and I was thankful to see chairs, placed round a table spread with dishes of little cakes, each cake was painted by



THE KITCHEN GARDEN IN THE IMPERIAL PALACE, PEKING



THE HEAD EUNUCH (RIGHT) WAS NOT ATTRACTIVE.

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hand with flowers in red and bright yellow paint. I longed to be able to speak the language, for all I could do was to bow politely and shake hands with myself, the proper thing to do; and then, noticing that the rest of the party seemed a little shy, I took one of the cakes that I was offered and prepared to eat it.

"Mademoiselle, do not eat that, you will die; they are doubtless poisoned, those cakes," said a horrified Frenchman in my ear.

"Monsieur," I replied, "the Empress is a very clever woman; she will never trouble to poison a person of no importance whatever."

I took a bite out of the cake and found it excellent. It was made of a sort of almond paste, and obviously patted and rolled into shape between the palms of the hands of the Imperial cook.

The Chinese potentates who stood behind us were quick to see I was enjoying myself, and plied me with all the food on the table, while I, realising I should never again partake of tea in a Chinese palace, made a point of tasting every cake I could, and found them all much alike; while the superfine tea, pale gold in colour and made of the buds of the tea plants, I thought absolutely nasty. It was handed in tiny cups, made of transparent china without handles, and, of course, was served without cream or sugar.

We were then taken to see the Halls of Audience and the Palace gardens. The first thing to attract me were the ornamental fir trees, certainly very old, and remarkable for having white trunks very much like a birch tree. Of course, I had noticed these before on old Chinese screens but, like the fiery dragons, I thought they were due to the vivid imagination of the artists; yet here they were in full beauty



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and, though I looked for them afterwards, I never saw any more like them either in China or Japan.

On the whole I thought the Winter Palace disappointing. For one thing the halls are scattered about like large and very ornate cricket pavilions, and extremely inconvenient, one would think, in wet weather. I imagine fear of fire was probably the reason for their being so detached. Also I think lacquer, however beautiful in itself, is flimsy and unstable-looking, and the halls, though very large, were not impressive. What was very beautiful were the colour and variety of the various roofs, nearly all of the Imperial yellow, curved in outline and often embellished with dragons. There was a large lake full of lotus plants long since over, some pear trees inside an enclosure, and some beds of what looked like kitchen-garden things surrounded by a wall, but I saw nothing corresponding to our ideas of a flower garden. The Chinese, with their wonderful feeling for colour, evidently admired more the dark green of different varieties of firs and other trees, against which the colours of the tiled roofs showed up so beautifully.

Commander Hughes, late R.N., was in Peking when we were there. Without exception the most amusing man I have ever met, his stories were inimitable. One about a cat on the roof of the Wagon-lit Hotel was extraordinarily droll. Still funnier was another about a Colonial Governor who had given much time and thought to the preparation of two speeches. One was to be delivered to a number of men undergoing long sentences in a convict settlement; the other was in the nature of a solemn warning to a regiment of soldiers quartered in a town where the ladies were not only remarkably good-looking,

but extremely amiable as well. By some mistake the Governor muddled up the two discourses, and delivered the one intended for the soldiers to the convicts in their prison, and vice versa. As may be imagined, that story was not altogether adapted for reading aloud in the family circle, but one he told about a black King on the west coast of Africa is too good to be forgotten.

At least thirty years ago Commander Hughes was placed in command of a gunboat on a wild part of the African west coast, with orders that he was to suppress the slave trade—then flourishing like a green bay-tree—by every means in his power.

The Commander had passed several months patrolling the coast and hunting down the slave ships wherever he could find them. But several having given him the slip, the idea struck him that instead of hunting them at sea, he would catch them more surely on land by stopping the caravans, with their poor, miserable victims, before they got to the coast. This idea was all the more excellent because one of the chief caravan routes lay through the country belonging to King Gumbo, a black potentate with whom the Commander was already on friendly terms.

Acting on this new inspiration, the Commander went to call on King Gumbo, whose capital town—a collection of mud huts, none too clean—lay not far from the sea.

Commander Hughes was well received by His Majesty, who listened with great attention while it was explained to him how the King with his army must lay in wait for the caravans, how they must fall on the slave traders at the psychological moment and, having slain some and put the others to flight, how they must release the poor slaves and allow them to return to their homes.

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When he had quite finished the King grunted, and was understood, through his interpreter, to ask why Commander Hughes could not undertake the job himself?

The reply to this required somewhat delicate handling, for it was a moot point as to whom the protectorate of King Gumbo's country properly belonged. All the European countries worth mentioning had claimed it at one time or another, but no decision had as yet been arrived at. However, one thing was quite clear—while Commander Hughes was at liberty to do pretty well what he liked at sea, his powers did not include liberty to fight anybody on land. That, he made it clear, was a matter for the King alone.

“And what am I to get if I do this thing?” inquired His Majesty.

Here was another difficulty, for there was no money available, and the King had already been given more bead necklaces than he knew how to dispose of. Commander Hughes searched his brain for some other inducement, and he did not search in vain.

“Does the King remember the day when the great fire-ship sailed into the harbour?” he inquired.

Of course the King remembered it. How should he have forgotten the one great day in his life? Had he not been heaved into his Royal canoe—with some difficulty, to be sure, for he was exceedingly stout? Had he not been paddled out beyond the mangrove swamp to the great fire-ship itself? Had he not been hoisted on board, also with some difficulty? And had he not been nearly frightened out of his senses when a semi-Royal salute had been fired? Of course the King remembered, especially the cocked

hat which he had at once demanded, a duplicate in every respect of that worn by the great Captain who received him. The King remembered every detail connected with that eventful day.

"Then," declared Commander Hughes very solemnly, "like the great Captain of the fire-ship, Your Majesty shall receive the honour of Knighthood. First the battle must be won, the slave traders dispersed, the slaves released, and then, in the absence of Her Majesty the Queen, I myself will knight you."

When this had been translated, His Majesty announced his entire approval. To be knighted and to wear a cocked hat was far better than being a King, even on the west coast of Africa.

Together the King and the Commander selected a secluded spot where the army might safely fall upon the slave traders, catching them unawares and at a disadvantage.

The Royal army was not very proficient in the open, but was admirable when it came to rolling down stones, shooting poisoned arrows and, by other primitive but effective means, putting to flight its enemies.

When the attack came off it was a triumphant success, the fame of it spread far and wide, and in honour of it King Gumbo gave himself up to drinking Cape Smoke for an entire week. When he recovered he sent word to Commander Hughes he was ready to be knighted, and the Commander sent word back that he would pay a state call for that purpose the following week.

Never were there known before such Royal doings as there were on that occasion. The army, still much elated with their recent victory, beat tom-toms till

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their arms ached. The King was told to kneel down on his Royal black knees before the Commander, who, just in time, remembered that the King hadn't got a Christian name—not, at least, that anybody knew of—so he had to invent one on the spot and, touching him on the shoulder with his sword cried, “Arise, Sir Mumbo Gumbo,” at the same time handing him a sword all for himself. The King wore it and his cocked hat at the banquet that followed, and very little else, for the climate was hot. In fact, the whole thing was the greatest possible success.

It was late when Commander Hughes got back to his gunboat, and not very early the next morning when he stepped on deck. There beside the ship, ready to come on board, were half a dozen jet-black native ladies in a canoe. They were dressed in several bead necklaces, and had a nose-ring each, while their woolly hair was frizzled out in the very latest West Coast fashion.

“Who are these?” demanded the Commander.

“The King he is so pleased, he send you six new wives,” explained the interpreter, and the Commander is believed, for perhaps the first time, to have blushed. At any rate he had all the bother in the world to get rid of them.

After that everything went well on the Gold Coast for quite a long time; until, indeed, rumour had it that the authorities in Whitehall had not seen eye to eye with Commander Hughes in the matter of the knighting of black potentates. This was followed by an order to the effect that Commander Hughes was to return at once to England and report himself without delay at the Admiralty.

As he got nearer to England the suspicion that all was not well became a certainty, and something

akin to fear overcame the gallant officer as he confronted a purple-faced Admiral at Whitehall.

"Good-morning, sir. I hope I see you well, sir," growled the Admiral, looking at him with a fierce eye.

"Thank you, sir," said the Commander, "not very well, sir, I regret to say. My doctor tells me I am to keep very calm, I am not to get excited, nor to be upset——"

"Indeed, sir, indeed," bellowed the Admiral, turning even more purple than he was before.

How the interview ended I do not know, but King Gumbo, or whatever his name was, insisted on his right to his title. He said he had been knighted Sir Mumbo Gumbo, and Sir Mumbo Gumbo he meant to remain, and in due course the British Government, who had objected strongly, climbed down and acknowledged him, as any officer serving about that time in the Royal Navy can tell you for a fact. For this story is a matter of history.

Of course, being in China, Henriette and I wished to see an opium den, and were duly taken to see one of the better class. It was most disappointing; there was not a thrill in it, as they say. So far as I saw there was only an ordinary Chinese house, destitute of furniture, except for a few shelves like bunks in a ship on which were lying Chinamen, some smoking and some already in the desired ecstatic state. They may have been enjoying wonderful visions, but they certainly didn't look like it, and the smell of the opium I found so oppressive that I clamoured, after a few minutes, to be taken away into the fresh air.

In the winter, when on our way back to Europe, Henriette and I were in a train, and were aware that two Chinese gentlemen had got in and were sitting

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at the further end of the Pullman carriage. We took no notice until the suffocating smell of opium reached us, and we saw one of the Chinese smoking the little pipe with the tiny bowl in which was the pill-like morsel of the drug. His drawn face and dull eyes showed the habitual smoker. By degrees his chin dropped, his eyes disappeared somewhere into his head, only a slit of white showed between his yellow eyelids and he was dead to the world. It was an object lesson, and I could not imagine how anybody who had once seen a victim like that could ever venture to touch the pernicious stuff.

Of course, we were taken to see all the sights of Peking—the tombs of the Emperors, the temples and so on, too well known to be described here; and we had lunched and dined out with various kind friends, until we felt we must move on if we meant to save our time and our figures. So we tore ourselves away from the really enchanting city and took tickets by the Chinese railway to Hankow on the Yangtse river.

Every mile of the journey to Hankow was full of interest. At first I felt that something was missing in the landscape, but could not make out what; then I realised it was roads: there were none. But why should there be where there are no horses, no wheeled vehicles and where everything is carried on the shoulders of the patient inhabitants? Instead, in all directions, wound little paths flattened down by the feet of the workers in the fields, who were there by the thousand, toddling along, one man carrying two bundles at each end of a bamboo pole, or if the burden was too heavy for one, it was balanced in the centre of the pole with a bearer at each end. In a country where the average pace is two and a half miles per

hour, the railway is, of course, immensely popular. Coolies swarmed in the cheap trains; packed like sardines, they hung out of the carriage windows, all talking at once, and fine strong men they were, we thought.

Also travelling on the train with us was a high-class Chinese lady; and I have seldom seen anything so delicately lovely. Alas! her poor feet were distorted, and she tottered along on her big toes, each foot in a shoe about two inches long; she was indeed a "swaying lily," as they say in China. She was very small and her hands were tiny. Her face was painted dead white, her mouth bright scarlet, and her eyebrows carefully plucked until just a thin curved line of black remained. Her glossy hair was elaborately dressed with pins and ornaments, and her dress was of plain dark blue silk. Altogether she was like an exquisite toy to be kept in a glass case and only taken out occasionally.

I cannot say the Chinese railway was comfortable; it was very dirty, the food was horrid, everywhere there were clouds of penetrating dust, while at every station beggars thrust horrible maimed limbs through the carriage windows and begged for alms.

Hankow, when we got there, was not much better. There was a bad cholera epidemic ravaging the city, and the unfortunate Chinese were dying at the rate of twenty thousand a week. Even the European colony was suffering from it, and several people had died. Luckily, again we found kind friends. Mr. Aglen, then head of the Customs, took us to his house, and later saw us safely on to our steamer.

The Yangtse river cannot be described as beautiful. Of the consistency of railway station cocoa, it is sullen and menacing, full of hidden dangers, and so wide



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it is almost like an inland sea ; but the river population, to whom it represents home and a living, are very interesting. Up and down it all day pass the Chinese junks, each with an eye painted on its bows. " No eye, how can see ? " asks the intelligent Chinese. For the most part the owners of the junks are traders working hard to make a living, but infinite precautions were taken on our steamer against pirates. The lower decks swarmed with Chinese passengers, but, except for the cabin boys, none was allowed on the upper deck and we sat at meals with racks behind us filled with swords and loaded rifles, ready for instant use. That these precautions were not unnecessary was evidenced by the fact that, only a week or so before, a number of pirates, disguised as simple coolies, had got on board one of these river steamers, had rushed her during the dinner hour, had murdered most of the Europeans, looted everything they could find, and had got away before help was forthcoming.

Our steamer stopped constantly to put down or, more often, take on board merchandise of all sorts. The first time we thought we would take the opportunity of having a walk, but were driven back by the beggars and the diseased people ; to be jostled by a person suffering from confluent smallpox does not add to one's enjoyment, nor the sight of cripples with horribly distorted limbs.

We took refuge on the upper deck of our steamer, and were never wearied of watching the life below. In a quiet corner there was always a family eating rice with chop-sticks. The absence of eyelids, according to our ideas, was conspicuous, particularly with the children ; their faces and heads appeared to be one smooth mask of yellow skin in which two narrow slits had been cut for them to look through. European

eyes seem to have been pushed into Western heads from the outside, in the East they peep out from within.

If the Yangtse river had been in India, one feels sure it would have been worshipped. Like the Ganges, it would have been endowed with the attributes of a powerful god; but the Chinese outlook is utterly different to the Hindoo, and yet both are purely Oriental. There were no devotees bathing in the Yangtse that I ever saw; a little episode that happened in India could never have occurred in China.

When we were in India for the last Durbar, Mother and I for a few days were the guests of the Maharajah of Benares, and with some other guests were taken round to see the sights of that unique city.

Mother, sailing along with the more distinguished visitors, talked learnedly about caste, sects, and what not; while I, in the rear, fell to the lot of the lesser lights, especially of one young Hindoo who, I understood, was an Under-Secretary or something of the sort attached to the household of the Maharajah.

The young Hindoo was painfully thin and was dressed in a loud suit of checks, quite two sizes too small for him: the buttons would only just meet across his attenuated chest, and bits of bulging white cotton showed between each.

Why better-class Hindoos so often wear European clothes several sizes too small for them, goodness only knows, but there it is. This young man spoke English remarkably well—in fact, he nearly talked my head off, and I had great difficulty in getting a word in now and again.

“You see that man there,” said the Secretary, waving a thin brown hand. “In my country we call him a Gooroo; he is very holy.”

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Squatting on the edge of the sacred Ganges was a most unattractive object: a very fat Hindoo, with no clothes on, or hardly any, and plastered all over with ashes, his nasty matted hair grey with them. He never moved, but sat apparently in a kind of trance, gazing at the river.

"He is very holy," said the Secretary in an awed voice.

"He is very fat," I said, having a prosaic mind.

"He is fat because he eat so much," explained the Secretary.

"What does he eat?" I asked.

"He eat all he can get," replied the Secretary. "When the harvest come the people bring the Gooroos plenty of millet, and they eat all day and all night; they never stop. One Gooroo eat ten pounds of millet all at one time."

"Ten pounds!" I echoed incredulously, thinking how difficult I would find it to get down half a pound of stodgy porridge. "How could any Gooroo swallow ten pounds' weight of meal at one sitting?" I asked.

"He drank plenty sherbet, that wash it down," explained the Secretary.

"He must have felt ill afterwards," I said.

"He was very ill," said the Secretary, wagging his head.

"And what did they do then?" I asked.

"They put him on a stretcher to bathe him in the Ganges. It is very good to bathe in the Ganges when you are sick," said the Secretary. "On the way to the river they met the English doctor, and he say, 'Hullo, Gooroo! What is the matter with you?' for the Doctor Sahib, he know the Gooroo very well, for he was a very holy man. Then the Gooroo, he say, 'O Doctor! I eat ten pounds of millet all at one

time, and now I am very sick, and I go to bathe in Mother Ganges that she may make me well.' And the Doctor Sahib say, 'O Gooroo, you come up to the hospital, and I will give you a pill, or perhaps a glass of medicine.' And the Gooroo, he look over the edge of the stretcher and he say, 'O Doctor Sahib, if I had room for a pill, would I not have eaten more millet, and if I had room for a glass of medicine, would I not have drunk more sherbet?' "

I once came across a family idol in a very ignominious position in the back yard of a native dwelling. On asking for an explanation, I was informed the idol had not acted up to expectations in the matter of providing a proper supply of rain for the crops, so he was in disgrace, and had been exiled from his usual place of honour until he could see his way to behaving better.

Everywhere in China on the banks of the Yangtse river was heaving, pushing, palpitating life. The workers, the poor toiling millions, slaved as if they knew that to rest, even for a few minutes, would mean to be overwhelmed, shipwrecked, crushed in the struggle for life.

To me China was ever a fascination of mystery and despair—mystery, for to the Chinese nothing is new, no experiment untried: they seem to have passed through the whole gamut of human experience and to have found it wanting. I felt the despair which came with the dire thought that perhaps at one time, ages ago, the wise men had come together, the sages, the philosophers had met in council.

"These people are too clever," they had said; "they have found out that life for its own sake is not worth while. How can we prevent the extinction of the race? How can we oblige these people to go on

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perpetuating their miserable kind before whom there can be only a struggle for bare existence, a lifelong battle for life ? ”

So the wise men bethought themselves of ancestor worship, and taught it to the people, for ancestor worship is the reason of life in China : they work that their children may live, and through them their own souls. Destroy their belief in ancestor worship, and the Chinese will cease to exist. For though Christian missionaries work and strive, none but the Medical Missions make any headway, or at least had not done so when we were there.

When we were lunching in Peking with Dr. Morrison, the famous *Times* correspondent, he told us how some time before he had been talking to a high-class Chinese gentleman. While he was speaking, a motor-car, the first seen in Peking, passed at a short distance. The Chinaman did not move.

“ You do not turn to look at this wonder-carriage ? ” asked Dr. Morrison.

The Chinaman replied, “ Why should I move my head to regard this thing ? I have seen many inventions come and go, but I have yet to see one that has added anything to the happiness of the human race.”

But for all the dirt and the diseases and the horrid smells, China is a fascinating country ; the mountains, though bare, are beautiful in their way, and where the young rice was growing were pools of tender green. In the large and prosperous city of Shanghai there were many Chinese in European dress, but one felt it was because they found it expedient that they adopted our fashions, and that their so-called civilisation was mainly on the surface.

An officer belonging to the British Fleet told me that a Chinese gentleman had spent a year on his

ship. An ardent student of European methods, this person had become to all intents and purposes one of themselves. A little later on, in answer to a long-standing invitation, my friend had been to see the Chinaman, then returned to his home. He found him squatted on the floor, dressed in Chinese fashion and eating with chop-sticks, and he even went so far as to pretend he had forgotten how to speak our language. He had become more Chinese than ever, and made no disguise of his hatred of the West and everybody and everything connected with it.

On the other hand, it is curious to notice the unconscious effect China has had on some Europeans who have lived there many years. They not only seem to grow like Chinese in appearance, but even to begin to think and draw deductions from an Eastern rather than from a Western point of view, at any rate while they are still living in the country.

# JAPAN

## I

To see China before Japan is to be disappointed, for at every turn the fact is thrust upon you that years ago Japan absorbed the art and culture of China, just as now she is absorbing the art and culture of Europe, and many other things besides. You meet a Japanese shopkeeper out on business; often he is wearing a graceful grey kimono and on his head is a small and hideous European pot hat.

In a main street I saw a charming old-fashioned Japanese shop. On one side of it was a bad imitation of a modern European dairy, over which in large letters was written, "Diary, pure green"; on the other side of the old Japanese shop was a laundry, on the window of which was an announcement "Launder—Ladies and Gentlemen washed very clean and quick. Ladies 2 yen a hundred; Gentlemen 3 yen a hundred."

Out of one window of a railway carriage one could see a factory worthy of Bradford, belching forth volumes of black smoke; from the other window of the carriage an enchanting Japanese cottage, with iris plants growing thick upon its thatched roof.

There are still, I believe, unspoilt and delightful parts of Japan where the tripper and the factory are unknown, but gone for ever are the days when people rode out from Tokyo in the morning and came back in the afternoon with armfuls of wild azaleas of every

colour; when a delightful Japanese house on the sea-shore could be hired for a few pounds a year. English people living in Japan had then the most devoted of servants, and lived on the best of food for a few hundreds a year.

Even in 1908, when we were there, things were changing all too quickly, and to me the charm of a lovely view or of an interesting temple is spoiled by oily, smirking guides offering their services, and insisting on slipping their business cards into your reluctant hands.

Luckily by the end of October most of the tourists had left, the weather was decidedly chilly and we lived in our fur coats; worst of all, the maples had most of them shed their leaves, but in sheltered spots they were still to be found. Quite delightful was a village called Sakatoni, near Lake Biwa. Here the maples were still in full beauty, and numbers of Japanese had come out to see and enjoy them. The trees grew tall and slender in a narrow ravine, and one had to look up to see the blazing red and yellow of the leaves. Under the trees were numbers of low platforms, like small dinner-tables, only a foot or so from the ground; on these were squatted the Japanese. So little room did they take up that quite a large family party, plus their food, found plenty of room on a platform only about six feet square. The grown-ups wore kimonos of grey and dark blue, but the babies were gorgeous in orange and red; one tiny mite would have a large design of chrysanthemums on its garment, but only room for half a flower on its small back; or it might be a design of a pine tree, cones and all, in black on a vivid ground that sprawled across the baby's coat. They were eating piles of cold rice, helped down by bits of dried eel or sea-



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weed, or little fish like whitebait, also dried and served in flat lacquer boxes divided into little squares, in each of which was a different dried fish or vegetable.

It seems regular hours for meals are quite a modern institution, brought in by office hours and factories and other horrid things. When out for a holiday the Japanese seemed to eat just when they felt like it, and all day long some party or other was sitting down to a big mound of rice and a little box of condiments to eat with it, while the lords of creation were also drinking tiny bowls of saké, which tasted to me like watery sherry, but I believe is really rather strong. The life everywhere was delightfully calm and peaceful, and full of natural dignity; there was no boisterous laughter, no changing of hats nor vulgar horseplay.

In the villages the rice had just been harvested, and was being dried on mats on the ground. It showed how truthful are the old Japanese prints; the artists depicted what they saw; their consummate art was to show in a few lines the whole life of a village. One wonders if it is recorded how they worked. Phil May, who had the art of indicating a picture in a few strokes, is known to have elaborately filled in his sketches and then to have taken out all but the indispensable lines. It would be interesting to know if the Japanese masters used the same methods.

Owing to the Japanese Ambassador having been a frequent guest in my Father's house in London, we were most kindly received in Tokyo, where the erstwhile Ambassador was now Minister of Foreign Affairs. At once we received an imposing card inviting us to the Imperial garden party, and another to a ball which the Minister was himself giving to some members of the Imperial family. We were also introduced to the Chamberlain to the Empress,

and his kind and excellent English-speaking daughter, who immediately took us under her protection and insisted we should lunch with her and Count Kagawa, her father, at the Sheba palace the following day.

The Sheba palace is, or at least was, half European, and was used for foreign personages when visiting the Japanese Court. On our arrival we were received by the Count, who, alas! spoke no English. He was dressed in European clothes, as was his daughter, and we sat down on chairs to a luncheon served by an excellent French cook. There were several other Japanese present: I sat next to the Chamberlain, on my other side being Count Watanabé, Maître des Cérémonies de la Cour de l'Impératrice, etc., etc. Count Kagawa was tiny, but even according to our ideas good-looking; Count Watanabé, on the contrary, was frankly ugly, with a long face like a tombstone and teeth like a horse. They both told me they much preferred European food once they had become accustomed to it, and never wore their beautiful dress except in the hottest days in summer; they said they found Japanese dress so draughty.

After luncheon we were shown round the Palace gardens. At a snail's crawl we walked along, Count Kagawa on one side, Count Watanabé on the other. Both held their hats in one hand, while with the other they supported me whenever we went up or down a step, which it seemed to me we were doing nearly all the time. It was the nearest approach to being a royal personage that I have ever achieved, and after an hour or so I had had quite enough of it.

True Japanese gardens are disappointing in many ways, and personally I preferred the tiny ones belonging to little middle-class houses rather than the large

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ones belonging to the palaces and rich aristocracy, but the rules regulating the laying out of them are the same for all. There must be water, no matter if it be a square yard or a square acre in extent. There are minute directions about the edges of the water; first of all fine gravel, then further away larger stones, and the big ones near the edge of the grass. There must also be ornamental stones placed in stated positions, and rich Japanese paid large sums in those days, sometimes as much as two hundred pounds, for a natural stone of the right form and size for a particular spot. Flower-beds there were none, and not over many flowering shrubs. Bamboos were used in moderation, different varieties of fir trees were the most appreciated of all, and, of course, the more old and picturesque, the more admired.

Baron Kato, who was on the point then of going to London as Japanese Ambassador, took us to see a famous garden belonging to a relation of his own; not a large garden, according to our ideas, still there were between thirty and forty gardeners employed looking after it. When we were there they were engaged in removing the old needles from the pine trees and, like monkeys, were scrambling about everywhere among the branches of the trees, armed with little baskets. The auratum lilies were over when we arrived, but we were given their bulbs to eat boiled as a vegetable. To eat them was almost as dreadful to me as eating a puppy dog, and I found them very tasteless and really not worth eating.

November 3rd was the Emperor's birthday. We were up at 6 a.m. to see a review of sixteen thousand troops held at 9 a.m., and most interesting it was. In the evening we went to Count Komura's ball, which was very much the same thing as an official dance in any other European capital. The one

delight was the decorations, not perhaps of the ball-room itself, which were large chrysanthemum heads of the mop-like variety cut short and mounted on a green moss background; too heavy, to my thinking. What I found delightful was the supper-room. Out of the centre of each round table to seat ten grew a pink peach tree in full bloom. The trunk and branches were real, the flowers were of paper stuck on with gum, and the effect was lovely, especially in combination with the decoration of the rest of the room, which was wistaria, of which the long mauve blossoms hung down three feet from the ceiling, flowers and leaves alike being also made of paper.

Our next entertainment was the Imperial garden party to which—so that there should be no mistake—it had been arranged that we should be taken by one of the ladies attached to the Court who spoke our language. At the appointed hour the lady called for us with a large old-fashioned barouche, half hidden under which were a couple of shaggy ponies, while on the box were a Japanese coachman and footman with top hats looped with gold braid and wearing grey European trousers.

In the carriage was an old Japanese lady dressed in a black cloak covered with shiny jet beads. On her feet she wore Jemima boots of cloth with elastic sides, and on her head, on the top of her seared and wrinkled old brown face, was a bright pink tulle bonnet tied on with a bow under her chin.

"My Mozzer," said the lady-in-waiting, as we got in, introducing us all round. The old lady understood no language but her own, so conversation was impossible. The footman shut the carriage door and, with a great deal of scrambling, the ponies managed to start the carriage, and slowly but safely we arrived at the entrance to the Palace gardens.

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Here it seemed we had to get out; etiquette demanded that we should walk the rest of the way, until, that is to say, we arrived in that part of the garden where the party was to take place. Of course, we had on garden-party frocks with thin summer shoes. I looked with consternation at the royal garden path. Arranged in European style, it wriggled like a corkscrew among the shrubs, and was an inch deep in loose gravel of the most painful variety. If my feet ached after a few minutes, my feelings were as nothing to those of the poor old lady in the *Jemima* boots. She groaned at every step and was obviously suffering agonies, while her pink bonnet very soon hung all crooked over one eye, but she was beyond caring about appearances.

I made some remark to the lady-in-waiting about the gravel being painful.

The lady looked at her mother with a cold eye.

"My Mozzer," she said, "she wear European dress two times in the year, for the Royal Cherry-blossom party and for the Royal Chrysanthemum party. She suffer very much; the boots they hurt her all the time and the stays they make her sick."

Once arrived we were formed up in parties behind our respective Ambassadors, while the Imperial party passed slowly along to a mournful tune played by a Japanese band corresponding to our "God Save the King."

We were then free to go and look at the chrysanthemums, which were on view in marquees arranged for the purpose. The great ambition of the gardeners is to produce one plant with a thousand blooms on it. The largest one we saw had eight hundred and seventy-five. The individual flowers were about the size of a tea-cup, and dark red in colour, and the general effect was something like a haycock mounted

on a pot. What I thought much more interesting was another plant with forty varieties of chrysanthemums grafted on to one stem. I couldn't understand how it was done, nor was there anybody who could give me any information, but there was the plant for all to see and admire.

The refreshments were in a large marquee with open sides carefully roped off from the admiring guests, who hung about, their mouths watering, as they gazed at the good things displayed within. The Japanese love European food, and to most it is a great and unusual treat. When, at a given signal, the ropes were lowered, the Japanese, nearly all officers of the Army or Navy, burst in, and, piling plates with a mixture of every kind of European food, retired to a table to eat it. Unfortunately many of them had no idea what they were eating, or which kinds went comfortably together; so one Japanese naval officer I saw had filled his plate with lobster salad and chocolate éclairs, and was eating the two alternately; he didn't seem to mind; on the contrary, he appeared to be enjoying himself immensely, and I hope was not violently ill later on.

It was obligatory to wear either European dress or the old Court costume when at an Imperial party. We were fortunate in seeing two elderly ladies dressed in the old fashion. They had on purple kimonos lined with apple-green and cut rather short, underneath which they had bright vermilion trousers like divided skirts. They wore their hair hanging down their backs, not in a pigtail, but loose, only held back once with a ribbon. The whole dress was most effective and beautiful, but I was told that the old brocade is very expensive, and cannot now be got, and the guests find European clothes more useful and cheaper, although, let it be said, infinitely less becoming.

## *Excursions and Some Adventures*

### II

To me there is just one absolutely perfect mountain, so far as I have seen the world—and that is Fuji. Always a miserably bad sailor, I crawled on deck early one morning in the Sea of Japan. All round were grey clouds and mist, out of which would suddenly appear little fishing-boats or little rocky islands, where, in sheltered corners, I could see flat grey-brown roofs like mushrooms, and gnarled and twisted little fir trees. They came out of the mist and then disappeared again so quickly that they seemed like phantom islands as I sat there on the damp deck, shivering in a big fur motor coat.

Wondering at the lonely lives of those poor fisher folk, and not expecting to see anything in particular, I happened to glance up, and there—high over my head—far above the grey clouds, I saw a perfect cone of glistening white snow turned pink on one side by the rising sun. This was the summit of the great mountain, this was the incomparable Fuji, apparently suspended in the upper air. The surprise, the almost intolerable beauty, took my breath away. How long I gazed at her I have no idea. Just now and again in life somebody or something takes one entirely out of oneself. This was one of those priceless moments. I watched and marvelled until the clouds rose and the peerless mountain was hidden. I had to wait some days before I saw her again. She was always changing, always beautiful; no wonder she inspired the greatest Japanese artists; but never again did I feel delight equal to that first sight of her.

It is a very extraordinary thing how, in the face of repeated terrible catastrophes, people continue to build their towns again and again on the same sites. History relates how Fuji, from being an apparently

extinct volcano, has already twice burst suddenly into flames and overwhelmed with hot ashes and lava the entire countryside within sixty miles.

When we were in Tokyo we could see for ourselves how the crowded city is dominated by Fuji in one direction and is at the mercy of the sea in the other ; in the event of an eruption or a tidal wave the city was bound to be overwhelmed. Quite recently there has been the fatal earthquake, followed by the still more devastating fire, and yet the city is once more being rebuilt on the old site. What is the reason ? For one thing, I suppose, in that already over-populated country there was no room available elsewhere for that crowd of destitute people ; they naturally gravitated back to the pathetic little heap of ashes that was once their home. Also amongst Eastern people there is the feeling of fatality. "It is written," means so much to them, just as the selfish cry, "It will last our time," is so often heard with us. These recurring calamities would seem to be inevitable, when on every side there are hot springs and dreadful holes where you are invited to look down into red depths below and listen to horrible rumblings somewhere in the centre of the earth, not to speak of sulphur fumes and streams of boiling mud. One would say there was every possible indication of history repeating itself, not only once, but many times over again. Poor Japan !

I think I enjoyed as much as anything jogging slowly along the country roads in a jinricksha, watching the workers in the fields and the life in the villages ; then having luncheon in a country inn, where the hotel-keeper and his family received one with many deep bows and much hissing of breath—good manners in Japan—and last of all jogging home in the evening when the doors of the cottages were shut and a dim light shone through the oiled-paper windows. Even



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in wet weather, and it rains a great deal in Japan, the country is always delightful. The farmer then puts on a cape of straw like a thin thatch, and the town gentleman mounts up on high wooden pattens to keep out of the mud, and holds up a large yellow oiled-paper umbrella with his name painted on it in black varnish.

An old friend tells me that, when he was in Japan nearly forty years ago, it was quite a usual thing to see a row of wooden tubs in a village street, and simmering merrily in each a happy villager. Even in the better-class hotels, in those days, the one and only bath was always in the entrance, handy for everybody. My friend told me that he was then travelling with a young and modest friend, to whom some of the customs of the Japanese had been somewhat of a shock. The modest young man hankered for a wash. Putting on a dressing-gown and arming himself with a towel and a piece of soap, he went out to reconnoitre, but came back hurriedly.

"The only bath is just as you come in," he explained.

"Of course it is," said my friend.

"And half a dozen Japanese are sitting round the edge," said the poor young man.

"Of course, they want to see if you are white all over," explained the other.

"And the landlord's daughter is in it already."

It was no use saying that that also was a custom of the country; it was more than the young man could stand—he gave it up.

I asked a Japanese lady how it was that her countrymen seemed to be able to enjoy a bath in water so hot that no English person could stand it for a moment. She told me that when she returned to Japan from Europe she fainted when she had her first bath, but by degrees she got accustomed to it, and now boiled

herself with impunity like the other Japanese. In the same way I have seen women in Australia make tea in the usual way with boiling water and at once pour off a cup and drink it. That, no doubt, is also a matter of habit; but there is also no doubt that it is exceedingly unwholesome.

The distinguished Swedish explorer, Mr. Sven Hedin, was in Tokyo when we were there. We met him dining at the British Embassy, and most entertaining we found him.

Recently arrived from Tibet, Mr. Hedin in those days was not the violent anti-English person he afterwards showed himself to be; on the contrary, he was almost oppressively polite, and buttered up England and the English in every possible way. The butter he used was not always of the very best, to our thinking; sometimes it was merely margarine, but I noticed that he was not averse to being buttered up in return, and preferred it laid on with a table knife.

Of course, the conversation at dinner centred on Tibet and Mr. Sven Hedin's explorations in that remote region. The rest of the company knew very little about that particular part of the world, but some of us tried to show an intelligent interest, and asked a few questions by way of drawing out the distinguished explorer. Mr. Hedin was not one to waste the pearls of his conversation on the desert air of a single individual.

"Excuse me, dear lady, one moment," and with a wave of his hand he checked further remarks until he had been able to reef in the attention of a sufficient number of the other guests to make it worth while replying. Then he began, "As my fair neighbour has just remarked, the chain of mountains discovered by me north of the Raka Tsanpo river——"

All this was very instructive. If any of us had

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ever heard before of the Raka Tsanpo—or some such river—it might have been still more interesting; that we had not was, of course, our own misfortune, but we were destined to hear all about it that night. We certainly heard nothing else during dinner.

Then came a short respite in the drawing-room before the men came out to join us, after which Mr. Hedin took up a strategic position on the hearthrug and began again.

“You will remember,” he said, “we had got as far as the Chum-Chan range. I will resume my story from that point.” He caught sight of the sofa close to him. “Ah!” he said, “I can illustrate what I mean; I can give you some idea now of the range as seen by me for the first time.”

He seized a sofa cushion and poised it on its edge. “Here we have Mount ——” and he mentioned a name all Chumps and Chuns, and then, seizing another cushion, he said, “Here we have Mount ——” and he mentioned another impossible name. “And now!” and he seized a third cushion, “here is Mount Chan-Wang.”

He gave “Mount Chan-Wang” a punch and placed it in line with the others; he then seized a beautiful Nankin vase and placed it on the top of the cushion and balanced a jade figure on the top of that. “Here!” he said in triumph, “here we have the summit of Mount Chan-Wang, upon which I believe I am correct in stating that no other European eyes but my own have ever gazed.”

Our eyes too were glued upon “Mount Chan-Wang,” not because of what Mr. Hedin had said, but because, with horror and consternation, we saw that the lovely jade figure was doomed in another moment to crash on to the floor, followed probably by the Nankin vase.

The lady who had acted as our hostess in the absence of Her Excellency rose to the occasion. Rather pale, she moved to the sofa, and with one hand rescued the jade figure just in time, whilst with the other she steadied the Nankin vase.

"How very interesting, Mr. Hedin," she said, for that gentleman was gazing at her with no small astonishment. "We have never heard anything like this before, but don't you think we had better perhaps move into the billiard-room? We can all see and hear much better there."

Mr. Hedin looked round the room. Some of the ladies were talking, two had even got their backs turned towards him; obviously they had not been able to see or hear properly. He gave dignified approval.

"Let us go," he said.

Rather dazed by the amount of information that had been poured out upon us, we streamed into the billiard-room.

"Ah!" said Mr. Hedin with some satisfaction, "this is better."

He placed himself in front of a priceless old lacquer screen and continued his lecture. He was in his element now: at last the whole attention of everyone in the room was concentrated upon him. "Now we will resume," he said. "At this point you will remember I told you that the Brahmaputra river runs from east to west. Ah! I will show you. I can make that plain." He darted to the billiard table and helped himself to a lump of chalk, and before anybody could stop him the Brahmaputra river appeared in the shape of a broad white stripe right across the precious lacquer screen.

"And here is the Kamba river," announced Mr. Hedin, and he drew a second long white stripe.

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It was too awful! Old lacquer must never even be touched by a vulgar duster; gently wiping with an old and soft silk handkerchief is all it requires.

His Excellency had not realised what was going on, and his Staff were too petrified with horror to move. In the meantime the intrepid traveller had scrawled a series of white marks all over the lacquer above the white stripes—marks something like a temperature chart drawn up by a lunatic nurse.

"There," he said, surveying his handiwork with pride, "there is the range of the Chan-Gong mountains. I think this slight sketch will give you some idea of the wonderful panorama that burst upon me, the first European to set eyes on that matchless mountain range, which I think I have well named the Heart of the World."

### III

Before we left Tokyo Count Kagawa and his daughter invited us to a large luncheon party, and most kindly inquired if we preferred Japanese or French cooking. Of course, we voted in favour of Japanese, not having till then had the opportunity of sampling high-class Japanese food.

Out of consideration for us we all sat at a large table and were allowed chairs, though, of course, we ought properly to have been seated on the floor and to have eaten with chop-sticks; and this time I was given a spoon, and I noticed the other guests, all Japanese except ourselves, had spoons also. I rather think they thought it smarter than using chop-sticks; in fact, they would infinitely have preferred French cooking and an altogether European meal.

The dinner service was beautiful; it was all to match, of dark-coloured lacquer of great age and

value, each piece being marked with the Kagawa crest in dull gold. There must have been hundreds of bowls and trays belonging to the service, for each person had two lacquer trays placed in front of him or her, each tray containing six or eight little bowls of different kinds of eatables, which were changed and replaced by others in bewildering variety. I counted fifty-two different dishes, mostly of fish or vegetables, but I think there must have been more.

There seemed no particular sequence in the dishes. Of soups there were seven or eight different kinds which arrived at intervals; one, made of some sort of custard with pieces of stewed eel in it, I thought very good. So were bamboo shoots, looking and tasting very like asparagus. We had cold woodcock cut up into convenient little pieces, some sort of root rather like sweet potatoes, ducks' livers, ginger and boiled sweet chestnuts, shredded turnip and cold baked fishes of different kinds. Eels were served in at least five different ways. I couldn't keep count of the different viands; my difficulty was to find out the proper order in which to eat them, until I was told that the polite way was to pick about like a hen, eating first a little out of one bowl and then out of another.

Amongst the bowls placed in front of me was one containing a pink chrysanthemum flower with a bud and a couple of green leaves. I imagined it was a finger-bowl, and meant to be used as such, until the charming little Count jumped up and invited me to eat the flower. Unfortunately I got a whiff of it before I had swallowed my first mouthful. The chrysanthemum was composed of strips of raw fish, and I am dreadfully afraid the strips must have been cut off a live fish, or at least one only half dead, to have made them crinkle up exactly like the petals of a flower.

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About half-way through the luncheon there was a pause, and I thought we had come to an end, but not a bit of it. More dishes than ever appeared, and for the first time rice was served; two different kinds of it, plain boiled, and at the same time came seaweed, both red and green, and raw string beans, and a vegetable somewhat like cabbage, as well as lobster, cold salmon, oranges and grapes, and pieces of melon soaked in saké, which was the only dish I ate that I thought absolutely nasty; it was indeed horrible! The raw fish had tried me hard, I couldn't stand the smell of it, but the melon in saké was far worse. I suppose Dr. Johnson would have spit it out, but I swallowed the piece I had taken, and the effort brought tears into my eyes. Melon in saké is laid down as we lay down port, and the older it is the better. The piece I ate I am quite sure was very, very old. One of the Japanese gentlemen present had seen my struggles, and told me that few Japanese care about that particular dish. No wonder I did not appreciate it!

With the first half of luncheon saké was offered, and hot, sweet rice wine, as well as rice water, which was served cold. With the second part we had tea roasted twice, very expensive and, I thought, good, though slightly bitter, and served, of course, without sugar or milk. Milk, when we were in Japan, was only used habitually by Europeans, and a Japanese lady told me that when her old mother was ordered to drink it by her doctor, they had great difficulty before she could be induced to swallow it; she was convinced it would make her sick.

When we left, the dear little Count presented us each with a box containing six large rich cakes. Certainly the Japanese are the most hospitable of people.

On the whole I think I prefer Chinese food to Japanese. Except for the soups, all Japanese food is cold, while Chinese food, as a rule, is served hot. Also, the Chinese make great use of nuts, which are always good. Perhaps the explanation is that we were in China and Japan in the autumn, when the weather was decidedly chilly, so we would naturally prefer Chinese cooking; in hot weather I quite believe Japanese dishes might be more acceptable.

It seems to me that there are only two aspects from which one is justified in writing about a strange country—one is as a newcomer, when everything strikes one from a fresh point of view; the other is after one has lived in the country for years and understands something about it. There are drawbacks to each. As a tripper of the greenest variety I longed for an expert to explain things to me—for instance, the rice crop: why are the seedlings transplanted and apparently never sown directly on the spot where they are to grow?

Japan shows even greater varieties of climate than the British Isles. The most southern parts are much warmer than the most sheltered spots in the south of England, while the extreme north has a climate which in winter is little short of arctic, so that although the rice crop had been harvested when we arrived in Tokyo, yet cultivation was going on in the other parts, and we saw the whole process of growing the staple food of the country, that process being the same, so far as I could see, both in China and Japan.

A little stream comes from a mountain top; half-way down it is captured by the patient farmers and is directed into little channels, and from the channels into paddy-fields, as the rice-fields are called. Some are barely the size of a small dinner-table, the largest hardly an acre in extent. They are banked up until



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a whole mountain-side looks like a series of shallow trays one above the other, and all watered by the one little stream flowing down from above. A few of the smallest fields are sown thick with rice seed and kept carefully watered until the young plants are about a foot high; at that age they are the most vivid shade of bright green, and show up wonderfully against the little mud containing walls.

It is then that the farmers, with their wives and relations, set to work. They turn their trousers up and, standing in mud and water nearly up to their knees, they plant out the seedlings in bunches about a foot apart, a back-breaking and horrible task, made worse, in some parts, by leeches who fasten on to their unprotected ankles. After the seedlings are planted, the water supply is the great anxiety, and European tourists go about with their noses buried in their handkerchiefs because of the manure used for the growing rice. But there is seldom a lack of water in Japan. A woman told me she had come in April on purpose to see the blossoming of the cherry-trees. She spent three weeks in her hotel, never able to go out because of the torrents of rain, and when the weather did clear the blossom was over. So the rice growers have not much anxiety about the water supply, but there are always grubs to be guarded against and birds to be frightened off when the grain is ripening.

There is probably some excellent reason for transplanting the growing rice from the seed-beds to its permanent quarters, but no one was able to tell me what it was. The educated Japanese I asked seemed to know nothing about agriculture and to care less. One guesses when they are young the plants have to be protected from special diseases, or from the

ravages of some particular insect pest, or it may be some edict from an Emperor in the dim past who commanded that the rice crop should be grown in this particular manner, and though the reason for the edict has become obscure, yet the practice continues. At any rate, it is against all European up-to-date methods. Fancy suggesting to a French or English farmer that a crop of oats should be transplanted by hand!

Though the flowers, with the exception of the chrysanthemums, were over, the bamboos were always a joy. What a wonderfully varied family they are, ranging from pigmies a few inches high to giants as tall as forest trees! What would the Eastern people do without them, depending on them as they do for the building of their houses, making of them their water pipes and their buckets? Innumerable are the uses to which the bamboo is put. I stood in wonder before some of the giants in the south, and speculated how one would set about transplanting a thing thirty feet high, with a young shoot only four feet high and already as thick as a man's leg.

To me the great cryptomeria trees at Nikko were more inspiring than the famous temples, the lovely tangle of wild shrubs on a mountain-side more attractive than the towns, and I was frankly bored after half an hour of a Japanese theatre. It was more interesting watching the audience, who squatted on the floor and ate rice and drank saké supplied to them at intervals by dear little maids who tripped about with their toes turned in in the correct manner; they were far more attractive, to my idea, than the famous beauties "on the boards," who also wore white cotton stockings and sandals, and stood with their toes turned in, dressed in gorgeous kimonos that lay on

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the ground all round them in thick padded rolls, and made it difficult for the wearers to shuffle on and off the stage.

We were privileged to hear a famous prima-donna, who sang sitting on the floor, accompanying herself on a mysterious instrument furnished with gut strings. The lady was also a beauty, we were told. She had a long, narrow face painted dead white, almond eyes and thin, arched eyebrows, and a tiny red mouth like a button. I have no pretensions to be musical; the beauties of half and quarter tones are lost upon me. So far as I am concerned, open your window any summer night in London and you will probably hear what I heard, not only from one quarter, but from many. To my unappreciative ear that lady's efforts were like those of a tom cat in a London garden. Why she sang I don't know, for just before she appeared several ferocious-looking warriors had been slashing about with murderous-looking swords, but I saw no corpses strewn about as the result of their efforts. She may have been a Japanese Juliet, but the plots of Japanese plays (and they often last three days) are quite as involved as Italian or German; if possible, more so, and I got hopelessly entangled almost at once and, giving it up, watched the chorus girls—at least what I took to be such, who postured away in the background in and out of season, and occasionally knelt down and bumped their heads on the floor. I don't know if they were afraid of cracking the white enamel on their faces, or whether it is, as I expect, the right thing never to show a trace of emotion; they never moved a muscle of their faces, so far as I could see, except once, when the artists were bumping in their best style, and I was enchanted to see a black beetle of the large kitchen variety

making its way slowly across the stage. It met one of the bumping ladies face to face—would her theatrical training stand the supreme test? I waited breathlessly, and saw a tiny fan beckon to a stage hand, one of those who bobbed on and off the stage at intervals and, because they were dressed in black, were politely supposed to be invisible; one of these came to the rescue just in time—in another moment the lady would have been put to flight.

It is the country in Japan that is so attractive. I shall never forget arriving in the early morning at Miyajima, the sacred island. We had to row across a narrow strip of sea to get to it. The mist that lay over the dead calm water was slowly rising, and through it, like a thin grey veil, we saw the fantastic old trees, bent and green with moss, on the edge of the forest. Between the trees and the stones of the beach was a strip of grass, on which were a row of ancient stone lanterns, and, feeding amongst them, were little tame deer, who later on ate cakes out of our hands. No human beings or animals are allowed to die on the sacred isle, any poor stricken thing is at once removed to the mainland. We stayed several days in the delightfully serene atmosphere of that calm spot, feeling very remote from the restless outer world. Miyajima seemed to me to embody what is most delightful in Japan; she is such an intimate country, nothing majestic about her except Fuji and her disasters, and much that is incomparably lovely. But her temples, like her gold lacquer, are not intended to inspire awe and admiration from a distance; but are small, and are intended for love and appreciation at close quarters. Alas! that they should ever be polluted by coal smoke, or desecrated by cigarette boxes and sandwich papers.

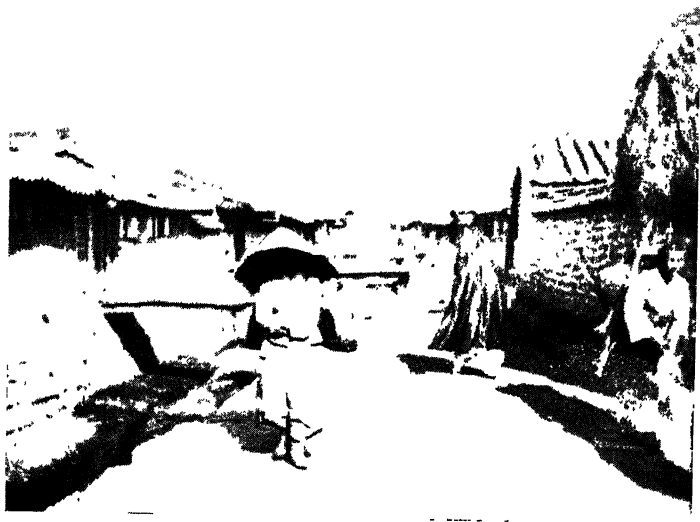
## KOREA

INSTEAD of returning to China we determined to cross over from Japan to Korea, and from there go to Port Arthur and Mukden, and home again to England via Siberia, but this time in the middle of winter—a new experience for us both.

We landed at Fusan, in the south of Korea, and the first thing we saw were some coolies carrying the bones of some prehistoric monsters that had just been dug up near the town, and were being sent to Japan to be set up in a museum. A little further on we met, for the first time, a Korean gentleman out for a walk. According to Korean ideas he was dressed in the height of fashion. He wore a padded coat of bright-coloured cotton over an under-garment of white, also thickly padded; both were very tight across the chest and very full below. Under his coats he wore baggy white cotton trousers drawn tight at the ankles with bandages, finished off with Chinese felt slippers, whilst on his head was a comic little hat made of black gauze, and equally useless for sun or for rain. Like most of the Koreans, he had a moon face, fat and yellow, and wore his coarse black hair tied up in a tight little knot under his ridiculous little hat, which was held on by a black string under his chin. He swaggered slowly along, obviously conscious of his fine appearance, which to our ideas was irresistibly comic. Later on, when we found that all the Koreans of the middle class were dressed



SITTING INSIDE HIS HAT, KOREA



A COOLIE WEARING HIS HAT

[*Tr face p. 286.*



the same, we got used to it, but at first our good manners were sorely tried. Men of the coolie class went to the other extreme in hats, and wore straw ones so large that their heads and shoulders were completely hidden under them; and when they wanted to rest, to keep their clothes out of the dust they put their hats down on the road and sat inside them.

High-class Korean ladies, we were told, went about in sedan chairs carried by servants, and were carefully hidden from vulgar eyes; indeed, only two years before we were there no women were ever seen in the streets of the towns until 7 p.m., when the men came indoors and the women went out. When we were there they went about in a coy manner, hiding their faces under bright green cotton coats that shone like silk; they used them like veils, and were never seen to put their arms into the sleeves that hung down their backs. They wore a knot of bright streamers where the coat fastened in front, and Chinese shoes. As a rule, all we could see of their faces was one eye, but in secluded streets their curiosity got the better of them, and we saw faces which were not prepossessing, but looked fat and dull; probably only the ugly ones were permitted to go out.

We did not stay long in the one and only hotel in Fusan, but went by rail to Seoul, the capital. The country was ugly, and as dull as a new country to fresh eyes can be. It was in no way to be compared either in beauty or interest with Japan or China. There were hardly any trees and no rocks; the rivers glittered a hard pale blue in the bright sunshine and the country looked poor and unfertile.

Seoul, when we got there, seemed to be a maze of little flat mud houses in the centre of a flat plain of the same colour. There were only about six or eight



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tolerably fair-sized houses, but the streets were wide and, thanks, no doubt, to the Japanese, were tidy and clean. When we were there the Japanese had only quite recently taken over the administration of the country, and the Koreans, though unable to administer their own affairs, bitterly resented being dominated by the Japanese.

The day after we arrived at Seoul we were fortunate in seeing a procession. The Korean Emperor and Empress, though virtually prisoners in the hands of the Japanese, were going to pay a state call on the ex-Emperor at his palace in the town. They had only a short distance to go, and the route was carefully guarded by Japanese soldiers. The whole town had turned out to see the procession—at least all the men were there, but there were no Korean women. We stood amongst the crowd, who were quite good-tempered and most polite to us; but, stupid and dull as they looked, I felt sorry for them, for they would press forward, only to be pushed back like sacks by the energetic and most efficient little Jap soldiers. There was no bullying so far as I could see, but the Japanese were decidedly rough, quite unnecessarily so, we thought; however, though their feelings may have been hurt, no amount of pushing and poking could have hurt the Koreans in any other way, for, in addition to their wadded coats, they had now put on wadded cotton trousers, and they looked more elephantine than ever. To keep their heads and ears warm they wore curious caps of black edged with fur in a long peak behind, and wore their funny little black gauze hats perched on the top; while most of them had on long fur mittens coming right down over their hands.

Many of the Koreans carried their children in their arms—nice toy babies dressed in bright colours, with

their hair in little pigtails. They were not old enough to have it done up in a tight knot like their fathers.

We had to stand for some time, but as we were in the sun and had on thick fur coats we were quite warm and comfortable; in the shade the thin air was bitter, and in the evening, when the sun set, we were driven indoors by the piercing cold.

At last the procession arrived. First came a soldier on a small shaggy Chinese pony with long hair, its mouth open and its ears flat back; then a company of soldiers, also on shaggy unclipped ponies; after them came three carriages with the suite all in uniform, and a closed carriage in which were the Emperor and Empress. Directly after the Emperor's carriage came an open one with, as we supposed, two ladies attached to the Court. They were most interesting; they were not veiled and had no hats on. They were dressed alike in bright emerald-green silk, and had their hair elaborately arranged. Each wore a roll of red like a section of a Bologna sausage on the top of her head, through which the hair was passed, and again passed through another roll, the same shade of red, worn at the nape of the neck. After these ladies came more officers in uniform, and another company of soldiers brought up the rear.

I suppose when Korean royalties pay visits they stay all day, for a little later, when we were walking in the main street, we met the empty carriages going home. Alas! something had upset the pony who headed the procession—perhaps the thought of getting back to the royal stable—at any rate, he ran away. Down the street he came, the soldier hanging on for dear life, and, cheered by the sight of him, the other ponies in the carriages ran away also. There was no sort of danger: the street was very long and ended

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in the mud of the country, which was calculated to stop anything. In the meantime, it was very funny. The royal coachmen were perfectly useless, and it was obvious the ponies had mouths like iron. One after another raced the carriages, while the Koreans, about as shapely in appearance as rolled-up mattresses newly come home from the makers, showed unexpected alacrity in getting out of the way; they fled in all directions, some of them falling in their haste and rolling over and over in the dust, and then, owing to their bulky clothing, they kicked wildly in the air with large flat feet before they were able to scramble up again.

Willingly we would have stayed longer in Seoul, as we wanted more time in which to poke about the town, looking at the country folk bringing in great bundles of millet roots for heating the stoves on the top of which the people spend the winter. The bundles were carried by patient oxen, which were half hidden under them. It would have been interesting to spend more time in the Royal Palaces, for the art of China reached Japan, it is said, via Korea, but we had to push on to Chemulpo to catch our boat for Port Arthur, and left Seoul with regret.

In the far north of Korea, near the sources of the Yalu river, are the Diamond Mountains, where the woolly tigers with hair several inches long are known to roam undisturbed. I was invited by one of our English Consuls in Northern China to return the following year and go with him for a shooting expedition into this vastly interesting and practically unknown country. Alas! if one is unable to avail oneself at the moment of an opportunity, it never, in my experience, occurs again. I could not get away, and a year or so later my friend was dead, and now, in the disturbed state of the world, such an expedition would be impossible.

Chemulpo will never be a prosperous port: the sea is so shallow that we had first to row out in a Chinese boat. From that we were transferred into a junk, and finally arrived at our steamer, which was bobbing about in an all-too-playful manner in a nasty choppy sea. After a dismal night, so far as I was concerned, we arrived at Dalny, or, more properly speaking, Dairen, as it is now called. Here we landed, and found a hideous town, full of factory chimneys and surrounded by forbidding bare hills. Walking about were wild-looking Manchurian men, tall and very dirty, their slit eyes glittering through a shaggy mop of hair, like Skye terriers, but not half so attractive. We left the place as soon as we could, and went on to Port Arthur, a lonely spot that became famous during the Russo-Japanese War. Here we were most cordially received by the Japanese Consul in charge, who took us round the battle-fields and, with his officers, explained everything to us. The campaign was still so recent that most of the forts were untouched, and remained in the same state as when the conquering Japanese had entered them after a terrible winter in the trenches. Port Arthur itself is a beautiful land-locked harbour, and looked very little affected by the war.

The Japanese Consul entertained us at luncheon. We had each seven wine-glasses, and our hosts kept theirs filled, and drank indiscriminately of everything they were offered. They were most lively towards the end, and our one desire was to avoid any speeches. They had just arrived at the proper stage to enjoy hearing their own voices, when, happily, we made our escape, and a day later were in the train on our way back to Mukden and Europe.

The temperature had been getting steadily colder as we got further north. At Dairen everything was

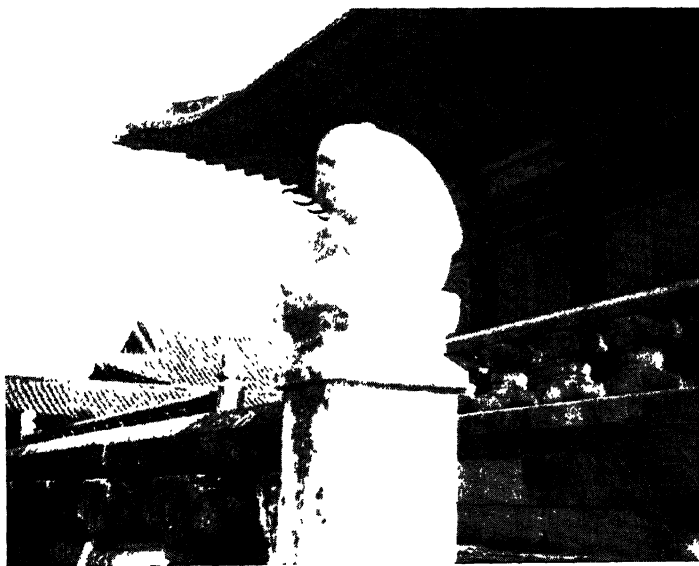
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frozen, the ponds were one solid block of ice, but in the middle of the day it was still warm in the sun. At Mukden on December 12 it was much colder; the snow lay in drifts, and the Manchu tombs, to which Mr. Watson took us once again, were, if possible, even more beautiful than when we had seen them in the autumn, but driving there and back was almost too cold for pleasure. For the first time I realised what it means to feel cold in the head. I had on a fur-lined cap pulled well down over my ears, and yet I felt as if only a piece of tissue paper were between me and the bitter air. My temples absolutely ached from the cold. On our way through Siberia I found my double fur coat quite sufficient to keep me warm when I got out of the train, but I always wrapped my head up in all the shawls I could collect, and I noticed that the country people did the same. The cold of Manchuria made our cheeks tingle, and though it was not snowing, every breath one took felt like swallowing tiny needles of ice. But it was wonderfully exhilarating, and I felt as if I wanted to dance along; but when I did try a little run I very soon stopped; the great cold took my breath away.

Safely guarded, first by Japanese and then by Russian soldiers, we duly arrived at Harbin, and caught the wagon-lit train that was to take us back to Moscow. We were now to have our first taste of real Siberian weather, a new and most interesting experience. The train was heated by great stoves, of which there was one in each carriage; beside them were piles of wood. The temperature inside the train was always 70 degrees Fahrenheit, sometimes more; and it was a serious matter, for if the porter forgot to stoke up the stove, or by some accident it should go out in the night, we passengers by



A KOREAN WOMAN, SEOUL.



CARVED MONKEY, IMPERIAL PALACE, SEOUL.

[To face p. 292.]



morning would all be frozen to death, just solid lumps of ice. As it was, I suffered more from the heat than from the cold, and often couldn't sleep because of the suffocating atmosphere. How I longed to open a window! But the entire train was hermetically sealed with double glass windows tightly screwed up, and a strip of plush nailed round the edges to keep out any possible draught. Notwithstanding all these precautions and the heat of the wood stoves, there was always a little border of white frost on the inside of each window, showing how intense the cold was outside.

The routine of our lives on the return journey was much the same as it had been coming the other way. Whenever the train stopped during the day I got out; generally we waited to water the two big engines, and it struck me at first as odd to see boiling water being supplied to them, but even the water provided for us inside the train for washing purposes had to be heated.

After the engines had had their drink they were uncoupled and sent about half a mile up the line; they were then reversed and sent back at a good speed, crashing violently into the standing carriages, sending the passengers inside, who were not prepared for the shock, reeling in all directions, and often drenching them with the hot tea that they were for ever drinking. By the time they had picked themselves up again the engines had been coupled up once more and had resumed their leisurely way. I could not understand the reason of this performance, gone through regularly each time we stopped, until it was explained to me that, when the train is moving, the friction generates heat in the axles of the carriages, but directly the train stops they immediately freeze up. The bump they receive releases them for a moment, and the



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train moves on before they have time to freeze hard again.

Chita in Siberia is supposed to be one of the coldest spots on earth, short of the Arctic Circle itself. Mr. Balsillie, a well-known scientific man who travelled in the train with us, told me when our train stopped at Chita that he inquired what the thermometer had registered the night before, and was told 45 degrees Réaumur, that is to say, equal to 69 degrees below zero Fahrenheit, or, according to our reckoning, 101 degrees of frost. That was the lowest temperature we experienced on our journey, but until we left Russia the thermometer always registered 30 degrees of frost at night, and generally more.

At Irkutsk and other places it was snowing, but whenever it was fine the Siberians crowded on to the platforms to stare at the train or to sell food to the passengers. Men and women, they all looked flourishing. They were dressed in good warm clothes, and wore high leather boots, and the children's rosy faces peeped out from warm fur-lined caps.

Of the food offered for sale the butter was the most curious. For convenience in cutting it was made up into bars, exactly like yellow household soap. The butter women were armed with short axes and a block of wood. With the axe they would measure off a portion of butter, and with the block of wood give the axe a smart blow, and the butter chipped off just like a piece of wood. As to the ducks and other game birds offered for sale, they were frozen so hard that you might have treated them like footballs, and have kicked them with impunity down the platform.

The most exciting experience to me was when the Cossacks raced our train. We would come across them riding beside the line in a waste of snow. They

were mounted on fiery little ponies as shaggy as Newfoundland dogs, with no necks to speak of, and as wild as their riders. The Cossacks wore long coats and the usual high black head-dress, like a chimney-pot hat with no brim. They rode straight up in their stirrups, with one hand holding the reins absolutely between their ponies' ears; in the other each had a short whip with a lash. Yelling at the top of their voices, they would gallop beside us, lashing their ponies, who can't have felt anything through coats like a hearthrug. Sometimes the riders would show off: some would kneel on their saddles and some stand straight up on them whilst going at top speed. Unless the snow was deep or the train going extra fast, they would often keep up with us for a considerable time.

One morning directly I awoke I pulled my blind up, as I always did, to look at the country, and was dreadfully disappointed to find what I imagined was a white fog, the same white fog, it seemed to me, that we sometimes get in the country in England during the winter, when everything more than six feet away is shut out from view. As I watched, suddenly, half a mile away, I saw two sledges with horses and men; there was no fog, I had been gazing over dead flat country covered with snow with no trees or hedges to break the distance. I had been gazing into space where earth and sky met, and I had not known it.

We were seventeen days in the train between Mukden and Calais, with one break of a few hours at Moscow, principally taken up in having a hot bath and an excellent luncheon. In the train, perforce, we had neither fresh air nor exercise, and yet I never felt better in my life. Good health does not seem to be much affected by fresh air or the want of it.

## EPILOGUE

IN writing these scattered memories of bygone times I hope I have shown gratitude for the kindness I have met with everywhere and amongst all grades of society. I have dwelt on purpose on the lighter side of the various incidents that came my way. Travelling in wild countries is not all *couleur de rose* ; there are bound to be unpleasant days, even miserable ones ; but why dwell on them ? The ration of happiness doled out to most of us in this world does not seem too large, and by constantly dwelling on the sad side of past days it may be reduced to a very small amount indeed. The result of my experience leads me to say—try to recall your pleasant memories ; the unpleasant will remember themselves.

If in recalling my own pleasant memories I have lightened an hour or so for others, I shall indeed be glad ; it is in this hope that I have taken up my pen and have recorded happenings that amused me much at the time and which I still recollect with pleasure.

E. C.





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